

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Revivalist Role & Two-Nation Theory

Mohammad Aslam

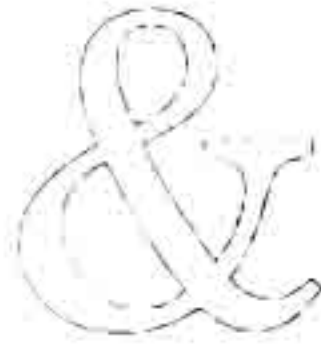
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's

Revivalist Role



Two-Nation Theory



Mohammad Aslam

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by Mohammad Aslam

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Tasawwuf

DEDICATION

I gratefully dedicate this small effort to His Holiness Sayyed Muhammad Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ who was an eloquent metaphor of Tasawwuf in the 20th century.

Our Real Death

If you say that the "I" is mere illusion
An appearance among other appearances
Then tell me who is the subject of this illusion?
Look within and discover.
The world is visible,
Yet its existence needs proof!
Not even the intellect of an angel can comprehend it!
The "I" is invisible and needs no proof!
Think awhile and see thine own secret!
The "I" is Truth., it is no illusion.
When it ripens, it becomes eternal!
Lovers, even though separated from the Beloved, live in
blissful union!
It is possible to give wings to a mere spark,
And to make it flutter for ever and for ever!
The Eternity of God is elemental and not the reward of
his action!
That eternity is superior, which a borrowed soul
Wins for herself by love's frenzy.
Why fear the death which comes from without?
For when the "I" ripens into a self
It has no danger for dissolution.
There is more subtle inner death which makes me tremble!
This death is falling down from love's frenzy.
Saving one's spark and not giving it away freely to the
heaps of chaff.
Cutting one's shroud with one's own hands,
Seeing one's death with one's own eyes!
This death lies in ambush for thee!
Fear it, for that is really *our* death (Iqbal)

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FROM PAINTING TO SIDRA-TIL-MUNTAHA

Shorn of any inkling of future things a brainwave took me to Daar-us-Salaam, my spiritual home, where my Shaykh Sayyed Muhammad Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had already chalked out a programme for entrusting me with some responsibility. I may relevantly mention here that the purpose behind his step was my spiritual uplift alone. It was the concluding part of 1988. Apart from his own insightful assessment, the Shaykh gave weight to the mature judgment of Prof. Afzal Alvi who would generously mention my proficiency in English. To be brief, the Shaykh put me on the job of rendering the reputed epistles of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, notifying to me that I should try to finish the work during his lifetime, otherwise I would not be able to do it after his exit from the worldly scene. In fact his predictions were always unmistakably true and later, as expected, I was simply seized by a sense of remorse over my inability to complete the assignment which the Shaykh had graciously given to me, promising a considerable award for it as well.

Here I feel prompted to present some glimpses about how an accomplished man, with an affluent background, was transformed into an eminent spiritual personality, impacting on the lives of a large number of educated men, including some renowned scholars.

Born to a Panipat family with an authentic descent from Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, Sayyed Muhammad Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (1909-1993) grew into a polished and talented youth with an inborn taste for painting and *ghazal* singing on harmonium. There was a gripping touch in his mellowingly rich, resonant voice which spontaneously appealed to the listener's heart. His successful participation in the prize-winning painting contests was another dimension of his creative pursuits and on the top of it was his fascination with elegantly styled western suits which he changed two times a day. But all this could not hold back the dynamic Sufi lurking in his heart and was destined to burst on the scene one day to the guidance of humanity. It is worth mentioning that he would profusely recite *darood sharif* (invoked Divine blessings with salaam on the Prophet ﷺ), even during playing football in college days.

In fact the destination of Shah Allauddin رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was approaching fast. After doing his B.A. he joined the Law

College of Lahore but left it without taking an LL.B. degree. It was during his stay in Lahore that he saw a strange but well-meaning dream. He found himself lying on a cot with a gaudily dressed ugly woman, symbolic of the world, sitting beside him. Simultaneously a saintly figure gliding down from deep space emerged into his view. Before he came down our Shaykh told the woman to go away. Rising to her feet she threw her head-cloth towards the Shaykh and told him to keep it. But he said, "Take it away, I don't need it." That meant total withdrawal from worldly engagements and his soul's consignment to Allah as our Shaykh factually underwent this crucial experience in the coming days. The ethereal saint, to revert to the point, landed on the ground with the pronouncement that he had been sent by the Prophet ﷺ to "save my friend" from the dross of the world.

One day his aristocratic father-in-law Haji Abdul Qayyum Abbasi introduced him to Khawjah Muhammad Saeed Qureshi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, an eminent Naqshbandiah Sufi from Bahawalpur. The visitor said to our Shaykh, "Could you recognize the saint whom you had seen in a dream eight years ago?". In response he simply smiled because it was the questioner himself. This caused his immediate initiation into the Naqshbandiah order. But soon Khawjah Muhammad Saeed رحمۃ اللہ علیہ died of fever and

was buried at Panipat. Yet there was no visible sign of change in Sayyed Allauddin's westernised lifestyle and his zest for musical *ghazal* singing and painting equally remained unflagging. Eventually it was Khawjah Ali Nawaz رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, the saint's deputy, at whose hands his complete spiritual change-over took place and his heart was overpowered by a strong ecstasy.

History tells us that man's quest for self-discovery and spiritual illumination sometimes forces a Buddha or an Ibrahim bin Adham to forsake his princely comforts all of a sudden and switch over to a life of rigours and severe austerities. In modern times too we find examples, though rarely, when a man like Shah Allauddin رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, involved in the thick of intellectual and aesthetic pursuits with all the trappings of fashionable life, suddenly turns to the practice of religion in too passionate and otherworldly a way.

SIDRA-TIL-MUNTAHA

In fact our beloved Shaykh was the choice of God as within a short period of time Divine love firmly got rooted in his heart. Under the onrush of this passion he embarked upon night vigils along with a perpetual practice of God's Presence for twelve years. Then he used to feel as if his eyesight had been supplanted by two yellow-coloured bulbs fixed to his eyes

and he went his way guided by his inner eye. During this period he saw a dream that he went flitting to the heavens at lightning speed and by reaching out to the lote-tree at the farthest end of the world he seated himself on a large leaf and was immersed in the Presence of Allah.

Of course this experience is something rare and speaks of the immensity of an illumined soul, yet it is not without parallels in the annals of Sufism. Here we are reminded of the insightful remark of Khawjah Ajmeri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ that he passed about the young Baba Fareed رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, while addressing Khawjah Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, "You have brought in your orbit a super-eagle who does not rest anywhere except *Sidra-til-Muntaha*" the remotest possible point of human accessibility in space-time, to use Einsteinian phrase. To put it in a more generalised way, in his (Baba Fareed's) spiritual ascension the first stopover is *Sidra-til-Muntaha*. Incidentally this bears out the accuracy of a religio-psychological truth that the Creator has invested human mind with inexhaustible perfectibility, both in spiritual and mundane spheres.

As mentioned earlier, it was Khawjah Ali Nawaz رحمۃ اللہ علیہ who brought a revolution in the life of Sayyed Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Consequently he gave up wearing the Western dress and

tore up all the paintings which were so dear to his heart. Once the Khawjah was sitting in meditation at the residence of his disciple that he suddenly voiced the intuition of his heart, "Shah Sahib, your room is reeking of unbelief." A recollection flashed through his mind that a female image was lying under a book on the bottom shelf. He took out the painting without the least stir, came outside the house and put it to fire. The Khawjah was still sitting in the same position with closed eyes when he re-entered the room surreptitiously. The Khawjah said "Shah Sahib, the smell of unbelief is gone now."

Thoughtful observers tell us that no earthly pull can detach anybody from his art commitment all of a sudden as it is rooted in the unconscious and gives him such a bliss that a non-artist can hardly think of it. The detachment is possible only in the case the artist reaches a higher source of happiness in a non-material sphere. Here we have a point in support of our argument. The famous Khawjah Muhammad Masoom رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once, while appreciating the poetry of his poet-disciple Nasir Sirhindi, remarked "Poetic beauty pales into insignificance beside spiritual charms." In other words our Shaykh had undergone a transcendental experience which made all material pursuits worthless in his eyes.

If Sayyed Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ washed his hands of all luxuries and started wearing coarse dress full of patches, it was not without a redeeming feature. The overwhelming vistas of Divine mysteries and infused knowledge opened up in his heart for his spiritual edification. Temperamentally I feel disinclined to feed the reader on charismatic and uncanny phenomena which so profusely featured his life. Just to exemplify his esoteric insight I narrate an incident.

Our fellow-disciple Sufi Abdur Rehman, formerly an employee of the Government Printing Press, was in the good books of the Shaykh who would often assign indoor and outdoor duties to him. Once the Shaykh, who possessed a remarkable sense of proportion and artistic taste, gave him some material for printing with specific instructions on the type and design of the print. The disciple was emphatically advised to keep all that in mind so as to avert any error. While returning from the work he wanted to see if the advice had been followed in toto. To his disappointment the print was completely contrary to it. He feared lest he should incur the displeasure of the Shaykh. Sunk into a gloomy mood he was walking with heavy steps that he heard a hawker's gobbling voice, "Sharqpur, Sharqpur, Sharqpur". But Abdur Rehman mistook it as "Sheikhupura, Sheikhupura, Sheikhupura", and hastily

boarded the bus. On reaching his destination the hawker uttered aloud, “We have reached Sharqpur”. “What an irony! I am making blunder after blunder”. Just to give a better turn to matters he veered around to the tomb of renowned Suif saint Mian Shair Muhammad Sharquri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. On reaching there he sought the spiritual aid and blessing of the Naqshbandi giant so that he should continue enjoying the good graces of his Shaykh. Thereafter he took a Sheikhpura-bound bus. When he got down from it he found the Shaykh standing just in front of him with the spontaneous utterance, “Abdur Rehman, you made a serious blunder. But you have brought such a weighty word in your defence that I am left with no other option but to keep mum.” The intuition of the Shaykh was really astounding.

Despite enjoying the rare gifts of the suprasensory domain Sayyed Allauddin رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would never give the impression that he could ever rise above shariah rules. Such a display of strict self-discipline is inherently characteristic of Naqshbandiah Sufis. That he had a special status in the sight of Allah is borne out by the Prophetic certificate which was awarded to him during a visit to Saudi Arabia. The Shaykh, along with his chief deputy Hafiz Nasiruddin Khan Khakwani and London-based deputy Hussein Ismaeel, was staying in a Madinah hotel where a man of God came by chance. The

stranger told the Shaykh that he used to do preaching in Pakistan but when he visited Saudi Arabia he was commanded by the Holy Prophet ﷺ to stay in Madinah “What is the proof of such a tall claim?”, came a question from the Shaykh. The stranger went away and came back after the gap of one or two days with the following disclosure:

“The Holy Prophet ﷺ has directly told me that Allauddin possesses five things (qualities). First, he comes from a Sayyed family. Second, his spiritual aspiration (himmat) is extremely lofty. Third, he has a tremendous breadth of soul. Fourth, he is a saint of the elect. Fifth, he is spiritually affiliated to (Khawjah) Saeed, not to (Maulana) Ghafoor.”

The Shaykh was convinced that the man had spoken the truth because he had no previous knowledge that the Shaykh had originally been initiated into Sufism by Khawjah Muhammad Saeed. ﷺ

To be sure, Sayyed Muhammad Allauddin Jilani ﷺ was a high-ranking saint with a large following, both in East and West. He had made his disciples God-conscious in the real sense and invested them with a sense of commitment with regard to the practice of Islam. Apart from eminent ulema, most of his disciples had college and university backgrounds. That was, I believe, true expression of the miraculous aspect of

his personality, what is technically called as Karamat. In all he had scrupulously authorised thirty-five pious souls to initiate people into the Sufi doctrine. His favourite and chief deputy is Hafiz Nasiruddin Khan Khakwani who apart from his aristocratic background of Multan, is equally well grounded in both Western and Islamic types of education, marked by a thrust into the esoteric domain. The reverent Khakwani has, among others, assigned initiatory powers to Sayyed Muhammad Irfan Shah, the elder grandson of his spiritual master. As for Amar Shah, the younger one, his mundane affairs stand on the bedrock of his grandfather's moral training. In essence, both the brothers are steadfastly moving on the Naqshbandiah Sufi path. In the end I would like to tell the reader the greatness of Sayyed Muhammad Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ lay in the manner he conducted himself in interaction with others, or how he behaved on occasions without letting others feel even the shadow of his penetrating awareness. It is a known fact that self-negation or breaking through the countless illusory layers of soul is an uphill task. In order to illustrate my point I narrate here two incidents. Once a young Pir of the Qadriah order accompanied Sufi Abdur Rehman to Daar-us-Salaam and stayed there at night. In the morning the Shaykh permitted them to go without taking breakfast without giving

even the slightest hint what awaited them next. This deviation from rules on the part of the Shaykh was puzzling and disquieting to the sensitive Abdur Rehman who kept thinking all the way about the Shyakh's apparent indifference till they disembarked from the vehicle at the city crossing. To their astonishment, a disciple of the Qadri Pir was stepping up and down the road without knowing the reason behind his futile exercise. On sighting his Pir he took him along with Sufi Abdur Rehman to his house where he entertained them with a sumptuous and delicious breakfast. Only then the reality came home to Abdur Rehman as to why the Shaykh was chary of entertaining his guest.

Once my fellow-disciple Iqbal Abbasi was admitted to hospital with a complete paralysis of his left side. When I went there to enquire about his health I could hardly recognize him due to the deathly palour of his face. Next day I reached Daar-us-Salaam and informed the Shaykh of Iqbal's precarious health. But the Shaykh assured me that he would survive. In the morning he gave me an amulet over which he had kept blowing his breath for two and a half hours after readings from Quran. Besides, he gave me a bottle of water over which he had similarly blown his breath repeatedly following recitation of Quranic *Ayats*. But he had done the real job at night which I

was yet to know. On my arrival at the hospital I found Iqbal's face quiet fresh. He divulged to me a miraculous phenomena, saying the Shaykh appeared in his dream and passed his hand over his paralysed leg. When he woke up his leg was all right.

Wishing to view the special spiritual status of Sayyed Muhammad Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in a true perspective I feel inclined to mention here a dream which he had seen during his stay with the great Maulana Abdul Ghafoor رحمۃ اللہ علیہ at Medinah. In his vision he saw that he was sitting in the row of prophets علیہم السلام - this is the last and highest stage of sainthood that a Sufi can possibly attain. In the morning when he related this visionary incident to the spiritual celebrity, he remarked, "Shah Sahib, when you reach this stage, do remember me in your prayers too."

Just to relate my personal dream experience with regard to the phenomenal clairvoyance of my Shaykh I would like to give here only two instances. Once the Shaykh appeared in a dream with the divulgence that if he came in my vision it could be no other person than he alone. This was indeed absolutely true as once he divulged to me in a dream in 1974: "Today I would be present at Haji Abdul Kakeem's house in Lahore at 4.30 pm and you must come also." I took leave from office and left for Lahore. When I reached that place the Shaykh was

addressing his disciples. He said to me, "Aslam, where from have you come?" I replied that I came direct from Rawalpindi. The next question was as to what piece of work brought me to Lahore. I told him that my only purpose was to see him. He again asked me if any fellow-disciple telephoned me, or wrote me a letter to inform me about his availability at that place. All faces illumined with smiles when I disclosed that the Shaykh himself had informed me in dream last night.

The greatness of the Shaykh was particularly witnessed on a fateful day of 1982 when his only son Sayyed Salahuddin Jilani died of heart failure at the age of 39. The Shaykh led the funeral Prayer of the deceased and performed all the burial rites with exemplary self-control and patience. What is more, he advised the weeping disciples to keep patience and pray for the departed soul.

Sufi Ghulam Sarwar
“A Mujaddid in Miniature”

Allah creates His choice spirits for the guidance of humanity but we don't have a fixed or uniform scale to measure their greatness with all its multifarious dimensions. Practically speaking, insistence upon such a uniformity hardly seems to be a justifiable stand. Fixation on any single aspect of human personality petrifies rational thinking which perhaps alone gives distinction to humans over animals. Small surprise, the greatest teacher of humanity, the Holy Prophet of Islam ﷺ, declared over 14 centuries ago: “Difference of opinion among ulema is a blessing in disguise for my Ummah.”

Moving through the gallery of history, to come to the point, we come across a rare personage – the great Mujaddid (revivalist) of Sirhind – who has left deep and lasting impact on history. Despite the passage of four centuries the vitality of his thought has not withered away. Blessed are those souls who through their dedication and revivalist efforts become his spokesmen and representatives. Presently our case-study is focused on an infused spirit, Hazrat Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ، whose singular passion of life was to project the true image of

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ among the common Muslims. Because this, he believed, would enable them to reach their Islamic roots by remaining within the framework of the shariah. To be sure, in his celebrated epistles the paramount concern of the Mujaddid was not to preach the gospel of Tasawwuf (Sufism), rather his main stress was on the practice of shariah tenets for which the believers would be put to accountability on Judgment Day. Arguably, we may call a well-intentioned Shaykh like Sufi Gulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ – a Mujaddid in miniature if we keep in view the entire gamut of his life, including his private and public behaviour.

Rising from peasantry Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was a self-made man with blessedness writ large all over his face and this magnetically drew people towards him. In other words his face would do the preaching job in an unspoken, uncanny way. Realistically speaking, I was impressed to know that Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ did not confine himself to cleansing the hearts of his disciples in a cloistered atmosphere, rather he took his reformist zeal to a wider, multi-tiered platform for the benefit of his Muslim brethren and to turn a amoral commoners into ardently shariah-observing Muslims. He used to say in a light mood: “We are ‘greedy’, motivated sort of people, keen to

lead the entire Ummah towards goodness, keeping in focus their redemption and entry to paradise.”

The revivalist sentiment of Hazrat Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ induced him to form contacts with people on three levels: 1) General public, particularly the educated youth who build the future of a nation; 2) ulema who are instrumental in consolidating the religious base of the Muslims and 3) the media who are a vital source of keeping people abreast of national and international affairs and are helpful to them in opinion-making. This shows that Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was not only concerned with the religious uplift of his fellow-Muslims but was also regardful of their modern sensibilities. For all this he made untiring and selfless strivings being totally unregardful of his physical comfort, money, time factor and, above all, even the risk of being put to ridicule by frivolous, captious minds on the charge of ulterior motives. In fact ever since his illustrious spiritual master Mian Jamil Ahmad Sharqपुरی invested him with the initiatory permission he turned into a committed soul and relentlessly took his separative-self out of himself. Doubtless to rise above one's ego is a superhuman task and a prerequisite for rising to the status of a perfect believer. Whether it was an occasion of celebrating the Mujaddid Day, or facing the ego-hurting arrogance of media

moguls on seeking space for articles, or provision of charges-free books to relevant quarters, or serving food to guests, one would always find Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ on the front burner. Altruism was the hallmark of his character.

If Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had had a good innings, a keen student of history can sense behind it the working of the vibrant spirit of the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. True, the age in which Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ lived had a peculiar situation with daunting challenges from the despotic rulers. Yet the democratic age of today with all its seductions and awesome array of irreligious forces is no less demanding and spirit-breaking as an English poet says:

The situation of our time
Is like a baffling crime
We are all involved,
We are all suspect

It is next to impossible to remain normal, poised and steadfast in today's situation but Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ kept his head aloft till he breathed his last. Professionally his life was absolutely clean and unblemished and what added a feather in his cap was the fact that he virtually waged a jihad to resist the temptations of an easy money. Another aspect of his

jihad was that he risked his promotions and spurned monetary gains by displeasing his Qadiani bosses, though not at the cost of his official performance. I think it is immaterial to dig up references to his miracles in order to highlight his edge on other practising Sufis because his entire practical life was an out-and-out miracle in itself. Moreover, it is not the intangible miracles which determine the greatness of a saint, rather his true greatness is measured up by his solid and tangible achievements on human level.

Let me make it clear that I never met this man of God during his lifetime. Going chronologically, my friend Dr. Col. Muhammad Hamid, who has a special penchant for securing maximum number of intellectual scores, would often exhort me to get printed a small portion of the Mujaddid's celebrated epistles which, as mentioned earlier, I had turned into English. But I was ashamed of my small effort, though I had done a lot of unacclaimed work on another intellectual plane. The destined moment was however in the pipeline awaiting my eagerness to take an initiative. At long last an indistinct vision started clearing up when renowned journalist Jamil Athar Sirhindi brought me into contact with Mr. Muahammad Nazim Bashir Naqshbandi, a dedicated disciple of Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. To my delightful surprise, Mr. Nazim Bashir,

travelling by overnight coach, reached Rawalpindi on a pleasant morning and stayed with me for a few hours. His frank and unassuming talk sank into my heart and what particularly made me feel small beside this young man was his total commitment to the Mujaddidiah Order and no doubt this bore the stamp of his mentor's overwhelming influence. When he went back to Lahore he gave me a ring to say that it had been decided on printing the document under reference in a book form. Evidently I should have been stimulated to know in detail about the life of Sufi Ghulam Sarwar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Mr. Nazim Bashir was kind enough to send me a parcel of relevant books in comportment with my eagerness. I am also under moral obligation to mention here the name of Khawjah Maqbool Ahmad, Member NEPRA, who out of sheer kindness extended his help to me in the preparation of this book.

I must spell out that I do not cherish any illusions about me, nor do I have the audacity to put on scholarly airs. I am just a small journalist but luckily I did enjoy the good graces of a great Shaykh who kept me tagging along behind him out of sheer compassion. It will be pertinent to mention here that originally I had written a lengthy article on Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and later I intended to spread it into a book form under a dream inspiration. But the plan was shelved for an

indefinite period due to my various engagements and my lethargy in the main. No doubt I do not feel satisfied with the present form of the book but the age factor and my poor health put a drag on my wish to push ahead with any expansive programme. I count only on Divine help to redeem its faults as well as my own faults.

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Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Revivalist Role and Two-Nation Theory

The first man in the subcontinent who provided for the genesis of the Two-Nation Theory was not a political thinker in today's academic sense, rather he was a very high-ranking Sufi who laid emphasis on the separate Islamic identity of Muslims in the teeth of overwhelming Hindu majority. It was Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (1564-1624) who clearly saw in his vision that the two peoples were poles apart and had nothing in common in any respect, proclaiming categorically that Hindus could never be accommodative and friendly towards Muslims. Ideologically speaking, this great saint laid the foundation-stone of the establishment of Pakistan more than three centuries ago. In fact, on both religious and political counts he claims our full indebtedness. Since he had deep impact on the subsequent course of history, reason demands that we should discuss his thought and teaching at length.

The 16th-17th century period, known for the political glory and military power of the Great Mughals, paradoxically generated causes for the moral depression of Muslims. Attempts were being made by the vested interests to prove that the dynamism of Islam had shrivelled up and lost its ability to

synchronise with the changing moods of time. Some sensitive souls like Maulana Abdul Haq Dehlavi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ came out to defend Islam and to keep its image intact. But the most powerful voice was that of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, popularly known as Mujaddid Alf Thani, who remarkably held and refurbished the Islamic doctrine in a difficult situation.

Certainly, there were some tangible causes to upset Muslims. The Mughal ruler had his own political interests and the Hindu factor provoked him to show apathy towards Islam and Muslims who were in numerical minority. The meek but the bigoted Hindus had come out in their true colours; to wipe out Islam from the Indian soil was their aim. The ulema were narrow-minded and self-centred and had scanty interest in explaining the shariah to ignorant masses; rather their thinking had congealed up and their emphasis had shifted from the spirit of Islam to mere rituals and hairsplitting. The half-baked Sufis claimed that the shariah had nothing to do with the religious experience which was the true goal of human life. Shaykh Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ took up the cudgels to defend the cause of Islam and grappled with the hostile forces on all fronts. He boldly asserted that the sincere practice of Islamic Law was in itself the Will of God and all voices of human experience were subservient to it. The Mujaddid's was a revolutionary voice

which spawned amazing results. The stirrings of his great soul reverberated in all the subsequent movements in this region --- Shah Waliullah 's reform movement, Sayyed Ahmad Barelvi's Jihad movement, 1857 War of Freedom, Aligarh and Deoband movements, the life-work of Maulana Ahmed Raza Khan Barelvi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ to inflame the Prophet's love in the hearts of Muslims and to revamp their focus of attention, the Khilafat movement, Iqbal's Philosophy of Ego and the Pakistan Movement, were indeed all organically related to the Mujaddid's call. Above all, he clearly felt that the separate identity of Muslims might gradually fade out in the midst of overshadowing Hindu majority if adequate steps were not taken in time to bring them back to their psychic roots - Qur'an and Sunnah.

In order to offset the effects of Emperor Akbar's heretic policy he took to revivalism on two planes: he strived to reassert the ascendancy of Islam through the strict enforcement of shariah rules and to weed out extraneous elements from Muslim life. As we shall see in succeeding paragraphs, the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had a clear vision of the political motives of Hindus, and felt the need of a distinct destiny for Muslims to channelise their religio-cultural aspirations and to pursue their economic goals in a free political atmosphere. Historically

speaking, he was the first religious genius who crystallised the idea of the Two-Nation Theory in the subcontinent. At this political juncture he truly played an historic role and was acclaimed Mujaddid Alf Thani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (the renewer of Islam on the beginning of the second millennium of Islamic era). Mullah Abdul Hakim of Sialkot (d.1656), the famous divine of the day, was the first person who called Shaykh Ahmad as Mujaddid Alf Thani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, and later he was permanently accepted as such by the Muslim community, including divines like Shah Waliullah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ.

Indeed, there goes a Prophetic saying to this effect: "A man will arise, amidst tyrant kings, after the elapse of one thousand years, who will be a great light and whose name will be the same as mine. Thousands of men will enter paradise through his intercession." Shaykh Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was himself aware of his enviable position among the luminaries of Ummah as he discloses to his son, Khwajah Muhammad Masum رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, in a letter:

"Praise be to Allah Who created me as a conjoiner between two oceans and a pacifier between two parties." (Epistle 6, volume II).

A descendant of Umar the Great, Shaykh Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

quickly learnt the holy Quran by heart and received his preliminary education from his father, Khawajah Abdul Ahad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, who was himself an eminent saint. Quest of knowledge took him to various places including Sialkot - a hub of intellectual pursuits of the Mughal period - where he gained mastery over all disciplines of Islamic theology at the age of 17. On his return to Sirhind he started classes of theology and rational disciplines and also took to Sufism under the guidance of his father who very soon granted him permission, as is the Sufi tradition, to initiate people into Suharwardiah and Chishtiah orders.

However, actuated by his leanings he went to Agra, Akbar's seat of government, for a fuller tapping of his talent. Getting wind of his brilliance Faidi and Abu'l Fadl, the two celebrated brothers who were Akbar's right-hand men, got into touch with him. Yet it did not take him long to leave them in disgust for their ultra-liberalism, egoism and disrespectful attitude towards religious authorities such as Imam Ghazali رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Right in the midstream of his scholarly engagements Khwajah Abdul Ahad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ reached Agra to take his son back home. On way to Sirhind he was married to the daughter of the Thanaisar governor, Haji Sultan. This gave him economic jump.

KHAWAJAH BAQI-BILLAH

Perhaps the turning-point in Shaykh Ahmad's life was his visit to Dehli in 1599 when he became a disciple of Khwajah Baqi-Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (1564-1603) to whose credit goes the spread of the Naqshbandiah order in the subcontinent. Being harmonious to Quran and Sunnah this order suited the temperament of the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. So stupendous was his progress on the Sufi Path that the Khwajah noted with surprise that he had been outpaced by his own prodigious disciple. He wrote to a friend: "There is an erudite scholar, namely Shaykh Ahmad, at Sirhind who remained with me for a few days. During this period I noticed uncanny things about him. I see him a future megalamp that will illuminate the whole world."

Khwajah Baqi-Billah's intuition came true when the spiritual genius of Shaykh Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ came on the scene. Both his private and public life revealed that under no amount of pressure could his strong will bend. Whether it was a natural calamity which played havoc to his family or the freaks of autocratic rule, his commitment to Islam remained unshaken. Undoubtedly there was a prophetic grain in his character.

AKBAR ERA

It seems pertinent here to throw light on the ethos of the Akbar era which is remembered for Hindu revivalism. At the

advent of Muslims in India the xenophobiatic character of Hindus, as says Al-Beruni, led them to self-pity and hypocrisy - the two psychological weaknesses which characterised their collective egos already split up for polytheistic reasons. Politically they obeyed their masters but their inward hatred kept them socially aloof from Muslims, partially to ward off the germination of Islam. Yet with the decline of Dehli Sultanate there was a wind of change. Besides, the grand Hindu State of Vijayanagar provided them inspiration and they had started aspiring to breathe in a climate of freedom. What was more, the unbridled liberalism of Akbar gave them political umbrella.

Their anti-Islam phobia came into full play when Hindus overtly switched over to an aggressive attitude. To mock at Islamic tenets and to use sacrilegious language for the Holy Prophet ﷺ satisfied their vindictive tendency, so much so that they started pulling down mosques and replacing them by temples. Authentic history tells us a lot about such incidents. Indeed, the Hindus were conspiring to do away with Muslim identity in India and to re-establish their rule as says the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in one of his epistles:

"All actions of these people (Hindus) aim at ridiculing Islam. They are waiting to seize an opportunity to come to

power. And their ultimate goal is either to make Muslims indifferent to Islam, or to reduce them to apostasy."

HERETIC STEPS

As for Akbar's psyche, he had a metaphysical bent of mind but lacked intellectual discipline due to illiteracy. This was the main reason of his mental confusion and religious somersaults. In the beginning he was a devout Muslim and enthusiastically followed the shariah. The mystic spark of his mind would urge him to pay visits to dervishes and shrines to receive their spiritual blessings. The shrine of Khwajah Mueenuddin Chishti رحمۃ اللہ علیہ at Ajmer was his usual retreat where he went on foot out of devotion on several occasions. The Emperor had an unusual attachment to Salim Chishti رحمۃ اللہ علیہ who lived in isolation at Fatehpur-Sikri which was later converted into capital.

DEEN-E-ILAH

Already a movement was afoot in the country to reform Hinduism under the impact of Islam which inspired Akbar to build a Worship House at Fatehpur-Sikri. Religious debates were held here in which representatives of all religions, including Christian and Zoroastrian priests, took part without checks and inhibitions. Every mullah strived for self-projection and hardly missed any chance to belittle the other to the

chagrin of Akbar. Not free from autocratic impulses, he thought of a syncretic blending of different creeds and put it in the shape of *Deen-e-Ilahi* (Divine Religion). Politically speaking, religious conflicts and rivalries provoked him to discover an easy formula for the amalgamation of heterogeneous nationalities into a single whole. A definite mockery of religion in itself, it combined the streaks of nearly every religion. Furthermore, the royal court issued a '*mahzarnamah*' (Religious Testimony), duly signed by the ulema, which testified that Akbar was a just ruler and he himself was in a position to pronounce his judgment in every matter. Consequently, he took a number of steps which antagonised the conservative ulema and created unrest among the masses. The king had come to believe in the transmigration of souls which contravenes the Muslim belief in the hereafter. He took Islam to be an outdated religion, and similarly he looked askance at the edifying role of prophecy.

Another factor which contributed to Akbar's heresy was a liberal group of Sufis who under the misplaced influence of Ibn Arabi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Vedanta deemed it unnecessary to abide by the Islamic Law in case one reached the stage of nearness to God or was permanently integrated into Him. Yet the sane element believed this was sheer tampering with the thought and

practice of great Spanish Sufi-thinker. Tajuddin Ajodhani was the main representative of pantheistic Sufis who suggested prostration before Akbar whom he declared as the most Perfect Man of the age, and quoted examples from Sufi practice to substantiate his point of view. This was like putting soul into the structure which had been built by Sheikh Mubarak and his two talented sons, Faidi - the Poet Laureate of Akbar's court - and Abu'l Fadl.

They had set aside Junaid's unforgettable advice: "This path is the destiny of that man who holds Quran in one hand and Sunnah in the other hand; he covers his journey in the light of these two lamps as a safeguard against stumbling into the pitfall of suspicions and groping in the darkness of heresy."

MUJADDID'S REFORM PROGRAMME

This was the milieu in which Shaykh Ahmad reached maturity, taking deep impressions for the necessity of a reform programme. No doubt in Akbar's later years the tide started turning when in 1597 Khwaja Baqi-Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ returned from Central Asia after being invested with the Naqshbandiah robe from his master. Some towering personalities, such as Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, Sheikh Fareed and Lahore Governor Qulij Khan, came under the Khwajah's influence, and thus the orthodox opinion

overpowered heterodoxy in the royal court. Some historical documents say that Akbar died as a Muslim in 1605. When Jahangir ascended the throne the legacy of his father's aberrations was still lingering in the atmosphere. True, the Islam-loving elements took pledge from him that he would strictly put the shariah principles into practice counterbalancing the misguided measures of his father. Yet under advice of Queen Nur Jahan and her brother Asif Jah they were scattered away from the centre and the court came under the influence of Iranian nobles. Shaykh Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ responded to the situation and started his multi-pronged campaign, fomenting hostility of the opponents. The result was his imprisonment in the Gwalior fort for one year. Yet Jahangir was aware of the amount of influence which the saint exercised over the public opinion, besides some of the notables in the Mughal administration were also his disciples. What gave further credibility to Shaykh Ahmad's image were the reports that most of the fort's inmates, including non-Muslims, had come under his spiritual influence. The king released him with a great honour and also gave his word that he would finish all heretic practices in the religious domain and do his best to project Islam in every walk of life. The Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ became special adviser to Jahangir and chose to remain in the camp for the Islamic orientation of the

soldiery. He remained in this position for about four years and had a considerable impact on Jahangir. Thereafter he took to seclusion and breathed his last on 10th December, 1624.

THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY

In order to give effect to his programme of revivalism the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ devised a three-pronged strategy: (i) contact with noted personalities, (ii) appeal to ulema and Sufis, (iii) work at grass-root level.

He took start from the topmost rung of society by entering into correspondence with the notables on social and political levels. That was indeed a right approach in the age of feudalism. Quite naturally, Shaykh Ahmad's choice fell upon those who were firmly committed to Islam. He urged them to stress the application of Islamic principles in their particular spheres of influence and to condemn un-Islamic customs and practices. At no cost could he agree to a compromise on Islam. A poet-friend of Abdur Rahim Khan -i- Khanan, a versatile genius and celebrity of the Akbar period, used Kufri as pen-name. The Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ attributed this kind of liberalism to attachment to Hindu culture, saying that the poet should be persuaded to change the pen-name:

"Kindly request him on my behalf to change the pen-name and substitute it for another good and Islamic one as this

will be compatible with the Muslim way of life."

In a letter written to Sheikh Fareed, another important man of the day, he touches upon the objectified leitmotif of his missionary literature in the following vein:

"The happiness of the two worlds is contingent upon the obedience of the Prophet ﷺ. Yet to observe Islamic principles and to abolish un-Islamic practices are vital to achieving this end. Because Islam and unbelief are poles apart and cannot come to a point of agreement. Compliment to one means disgrace to the other. Allah says: O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern with them (Qur'an, XVI:)"

The pungent tone of a great man like the Mujaddid محمد الله would perhaps sound odd to some minds but that was perhaps a proper response to the Hindu threat. Things were quite different during the early period of Muslim rule in India when a new situation called for a wise and pragmatic approach to win over the hearts of conquered Hindus as was done by the Chishtiah saints. However, during his last days the Mujaddid محمد الله had shifted to a more lenient and accommodative stance which is reflected in his epistles.

Another facet of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's reform programme was a ruthless campaign against those materialistic

and depraved ulema whose sole aim was self-aggrandisement and to cajole into the king's favour at any cost. Instead of propagating the message of Islam they not only corrupted his opinion but also caused enormous damage to the cause of Islam and to the Muslim community through their deplorable conduct. In a letter addressed to Sheikh Fareed he brands the self-seeking ulema as the worst and meanest lot of mankind.

MUJADDID V. IBN ARABI

Yet, above all, the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was much concerned with eradicating the ill effects which un-Islamic Sufi practices were stamping on Muslim outlook, both from psychological and social points of view. Under the Circean shadow of Vedanta and firm belief in the Unity of Being most of the Sufis had broken away from the framework of the shariah. Indeed, the mystical philosophy of Ibn Al-Arabi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (1164-1260) had, in the view of Iqbal, captured the imagination of the entire Muslim world and petrified its creative instinct. His abstruse thought, according to the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, is not without intriguing contradictions. He believes that since all objects emanate from one Divine Essence the created are identical with the Creator:

Thou art man, and thou art God;

Whose creature art thou then?

Thou art God and thou art man;

Whom dost thou address then?(Fusus al-Hakim)

It is very difficult for us to know the impact of Plato's theory of Ideas and Absolute Beauty over Ibn Al-Arabi رحمہ اللہ, yet the Great Shaykh has unshakable belief in Eternal Ideas which are fixed and unchangeable and manifested in all events and actions in this world. Obviously, this not only dwarfs man's dignity by robbing away his sense of freedom and responsibility but also reduces all human struggle and otherworldly affairs to a strange, senseless phantasmagoria. He says that all worldly objects have relative and imaginary existence under the shadow of one Supreme Being Who exists in the real sense. More importantly, Ibn Al-Arabi رحمہ اللہ is convinced of the immanent God and unlike Ghazali believes in Him only with reference to the universe. This view is apparently stagnant, unsound and unprogressive because both the Quran and modern astrophysics point to an expanding universe.

EXPANDING UNIVERSE

Allah proclaims in His Book, "The heaven, We have built it with power, verily We are expanding it (51:47)."

Whereas a modern scientist ,Lloyd Motz, writes in his book(p.29), The Universe : Its beginning and end:

"The idea of an evolving universe is a twentieth-century concept that grew out of the vast accumulation of observational data that became available only when the large, modern telescopes were constructed and focused on the stars. Without these telescopes astronomers could not have observed the distant galaxies and discovered that they are receding, which was the first important clue that led to the present picture of an expanding universe, in agreement with the predictions of Einstein's famous general theory of relativity."

Now if God pervades the universe, reverting to our point, it comes to mean that He, as conjectures Prof Whitehead, is still in the process of development and has not attained to perfection as yet. With the concept of an imperfect God the grand metaphysical edifice will immediately collapse. According to the Spanish sage all religions are basically correct and lead to the same Reality, and consequently different modes of worship should not be subjected to criticism. He develops a cosmopolitan spirit which is based on love and tolerance and precludes emphasis on any particular creed:

My heart is capable of every form;

A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,

A pasture for gazelles, the votary's Ka'ba.

The tables of the Torah, the Quran.

Love is the creed I hold; wherever turn
His camels, Love is still my creed and
faith.

To come to the point, the general scene of the Mujaddid's day worried all those who had firm faith in the infallibility of the shariah rules and their transcendental character. Because under the influence of liberal and misguided Sufi practices which were certainly rooted in *Wahdat-i-Wujud* (Unity of Being), the masses were gradually moving away from the nucleus of Islam, unbound by the restraints of the shariah. There was a pressing need to revamp their impaired outlook by helping them to rediscover their fundamental sources of inspiration. The Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ took stock of the whole situation and came to the conclusion that only strict adherence to Quran and Sunnah could defuse the spiritual crisis of the Muslim people, while Greek-Hindu philosophies or incorrect Sufi practices violating the Islamic Law would aggravate their malady. In a letter written to Mullah Haji Mohammad Lahori, an erudite scholar of his day, he highlighted his viewpoint in the following vein:

"Three elements - knowledge, practice and sincerity - constitute the shariah. Unless we identify them, the shariah cannot be evidenced. And when the shariah factor is

crystallised, we win the Divine goodwill which rises above all mundane and celestial felicities. According to the Quran, "and goodwill from Allah is the greatest of all. That is the achievement supreme."

"So the shariah guarantees all worldly and otherworldly felicities; and there is no such object as requires any other thing to reach it except the shariah. The Sufi Path and Reality, by which Sufis are distinguished, are subordinate to the shariah for the completion of its third constituent, sincerity."..." The ecstatic states and esoteric revelations which some Sufis experience during their spiritual journey are not the ends in themselves, rather they are the phantasies by which the Wayfarers are trained up."...

"Some unwise people consider experiential and ecstatic states as the real object and concentrate on visions and experiential occurrences as if they are the ultimate goal. As a consequence they keep groping in the labyrinth of their own whims and imaginings without benefiting from the excellences of the shariah."(vol. 1. Epistle 36)

MUJADDID'S VIEW OF GOD

Similarly, he warns his contemporary Sufis against practices which flagrantly contravene the rulings of Muslim jurists. As for the Oneness of Being, the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ clearly

states that once he himself held this view and also championed it fervently on rational and intuitive grounds. Yet by the sheer grace of Allah he outgrew this stage and acquired higher consciousness which convinced him of the plurality of beings. Here Shah Waliullah's argument loses ground when he says that both Ibn Arabi رحمہ اللہ and the Mujaddid رحمہ اللہ hold identical viewpoint and both are correct. Obviously, the positions of the both are different, unidentical and consequently irreconcilable. True, he says, there exists only One God Who is self-subsistent but on the basis of His boundless capacity of creativeness He has also created man as a separate entity and imparted to him certain attributes and qualities including the freedom of will for attaining to the ever-new dimensions of His nearness. He outrightly rejects the view that the ultimate aim of man's existence is complete integration into the Being of Allah. This is impossible, he claims, because God is unique and incomparable and shares no common traits with His creatures; in fact He transcends all human experience and perception. According to him it is heretic to believe that the universe is identical with God, and on the other hand he asserts that it has emanated from the reflection of His attributes. This puts the Mujaddid رحمہ اللہ at loggerheads with Ibn Al-Arabi رحمہ اللہ in whose view the universe is inseparable from the Creator. Shaykh

Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ claims that in his experience of God man does retain his survival as, according to Rumi's analogy, iron temporarily acquires the burning attribute in fire but never loses its distinct entity.

Yet the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ spells out on the basis of his spiritual experience that Shaykh Ibn Arabi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has place in the group of those who are blessed with God's favour and acceptance. Just like a jurist a Sufi too escapes the accountability if he errs in his psychic reading, he asserts. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's metaphysical posture bears the stamp of both the established theological opinion and his mystic experience. Servitude was, however, the last stage of his spiritual progress which demanded total and unqualified submission to the Will of Allah as unfolded in the rules of the shariah. His inner experience spurred him to proclaim, "I am concerned only with the Scriptural Texts, and not with Ibn Al-Arabi's Fusus; and the revelations of Hadiths have made me indifferent to those of Futuhat-i-Makiyah." To be brief, by dint of his herculean effort the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ wiped out the extraneous crust which had grown over Sufi thought due to the penetration of Islamic civilisation into alien lands and its consequent interaction with their cultures.

Lastly, his mass level approach proved to be all the

more beneficial and decisive as he gathered a very large following whom he brought closer to the heart of Islam by inviting their attention to the study of Quran and Hadith. Poet - philosopher Iqbal says that Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was the first religious genius of the subcontinent who took people from ecstasy towards sobriety. He appointed his deputies in all the big cities who actively guided people on orthodox lines, and also sent the chosen ones to Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia and other Muslim lands to spread his teaching. The Mujaddid's revivalism swiftly gained momentum and became a widely-spread movement during his lifetime. Jahangir writes in his autobiography: "The disciples of the Shaykh have spread all over the cities and the towns of India."

IMPORTANCE OF EPISTLES

The reason was that Ibn Al-Arabi's mystic thought had always been unpopular with the orthodox opinion which readily approved Shaykh Ahmad's emphasis on the shariah and took it to the public platform. Moreover, he managed to distribute the copies of his famous epistles among the ulema and Naqshbandiah Sufis for their intellectual reorientation and for the guidance of society at large. No doubt the epistles also fomented controversial debates in the learned circles owing to their uncommon and difficult contents but they did point out a

bold thrust into deep regions of human psyche which had hitherto been unknown to the religious experience. Interestingly, even today it throws up challenge to modern researchers in the field of psychology. Surprisingly, there is a historical continuity in the Mujaddid's revivalist movement which has also flowed into modern times. His illustrious sons, particularly Khwajah Mohammad Saeed رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Khwaja Mohammad Masoom رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, continued the mission of their illustrious father and took it to great heights of popularity.

MIRACLES

We do not contest the possibility of miracles but believe, as we are told by Imam Ghazali رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, Imam Razi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Shah Waliullah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, that a miracle is not the condition of prophethood, let alone sainthood. Above all, the warning of Prophet Jesus to his disciples against the demand for a miraculous repast from heaven implies Quranic rebuke of childish yearnings on the part of humans for suprasensory occurrences. A number of miracles are attributed to the great Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ but this article defies a room for them. But his epistles of extraordinary profundity and the fruit-bearing efforts of his able descendants and, above all, the Naqshbandiah movement in itself, all convince us of his unique

stature in the history of the Ummah.

SHAH WALIULLAH

The Mujaddid's voice which had tapered off long ago reflashd in Shah Waliullah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (1703-1763) who played a revolutionary role during days of political anarchy and social unrest in the wake of Emperor Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Combining the characteristics of a religious genius and political thinker in his person, he was a unique man of his age. He was only 15-years old when he finished his studies after gaining full command of all branches of Islamic theology, and was concurrently invested with the robe of spiritual caliphate by his father, Shah Abdur Rahim رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, who was a great saint of Naqshbandiah order. He symbolised a matchless synthesis of reason and intuition. He not only strived to bring Islam into the sunshine of modern age by providing it with a rational basis but also took all steps to revive Muslim glory in the subcontinent. Shah Waliullah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ believed that only political power could supply nourishment and vigour to Muslim life and its institutions. Keeping this fact in view he started correspondence with Muslim rulers and urged them to get united to stop the upsurge of Marathas but all in vain. As a last resort he invited Ahmad Shah Abdali, the ruler of Afghanistan, to overpower them but warned him against the ransacking of

Dehli as had been done by Nadir Shah. Following the advice of Shah Waliullah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ he came to India in 1761 and gave a crushing defeat to Marathas in the Panipat battlefield. However, the resultant power vacuum encouraged the British to step in to reorder and refashion the whole scheme of things in India.

Describing Shah Waliullah's historic role, Maulana Maudoodi writes in an article, "He attempted to present the whole gamut of Islamic thought with its intellectual, moral, theological and social aspects in a synthetic form. This is an achievement on the basis of which he has surpassed all of his predecessors."

After Shah Waliullah's death his talented sons imbibed the spirit of their great father and rendered invaluable services for revamping the Muslim destiny in the subcontinent. Particularly his eldest and ablest son, Shah Abdul Aziz رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, gave further momentum to the Jihad movement which was spearheaded by his disciple Sayyed Ahmad Barelvi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. The result was the Balakot battle in 1831. The event, on the face of it, marked the outburst of a long-simmering resentment of Muslims against the tyrannical Sikh rule. But subconsciously it was a desperate attempt on the part of the Sayyed to give a new lease of life to the fast-decaying Muslim rule in the

subcontinent which was being engulfed by British imperialism. We may call Balakot the locale where the grim epicdrama was staged by Sayyed Ahmad Shaheed رحمۃ اللہ علیہ to secure a separate Muslim land which was ultimately realized in the shape of Pakistan in 1947.

The Aligarh Muslim University and the Deoband Madrasah - the two renowned educational institutions and nerve-centres of the Indian Muslims - almost contemporaneously took birth more than a century ago. Interestingly, the two institutions were founded by two classmates, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan and Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanotvi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, whose psychic growth had sprouted up from the Naqshbandiah order. The former chose to acquaint the Muslim youth with the ethos of modern times, whereas the latter endeavoured to keep them steeped in the traditional values of Islam and to preserve its cultural heritage. And none of these two institutions lagged behind in contributing, though in contrasting ways, to the Pakistan Movement.

IQBAL'S TRIBUTE TO MUJADDID

Strange are the ways of providence. The modern era got Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ a keen admirer in the person of poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) who was the cultural essence of Islam. Iqbal paid eloquent tributes to the

Mujaddid مجدد in both poetry and prose. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi سرخندی and Iqbal opposed Ibn Al-Arabi's mystic philosophy of *Wahdat-i-Wajud* (the Unity of Being) but on different grounds: the former's standpoint stemmed from a theological angle, while the latter's hostility was based on practical and historical reasons. Iqbal's conceptual loyalties are entirely anchored in the Quran; like the Mujaddid مجدد he too views all matters through its perspective alone and rejects anything found repugnant to it. He was of the view that *Wahdat-i-Wujud* had weakened the political instinct of Islam by inducing the Muslim Ummah to shrink away from the life of struggle. The bitter experience of colonialism prompted him to thrust the Muslims into the sweep of history once again. He developed his philosophy of Ego which was in agreement with Sirhind's thought and laid emphasis on the freedom of will. Also the common concept of ceaseless effort was the cause of psychological affinity between Iqbal and Rumi. The same reason explains Iqbal's fascination for movement which is the motivating force behind the Islamic principle of *Ijtihad*. In the end we cannot afford to underestimate or deny the role of the Mujaddid's Naqshbandiah order in the Afghanistan Jihad and the emancipation of Muslim Central Asia from the Kremlin's clutches. And the resurgence of Islamisation which is currently

sweeping the Muslim world and has raised the eyebrows of Westerners, may be traced back to the movement of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in the Mughal period.

MUJADDID'S EPISTLES

EPISTLES

Generally speaking, epistles are counted as an inalienable part of Sufi literature and this tradition is spread over centuries. Yet the epistles of Skaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ have a special place in history owing to the miraculous personality of the writer and his involvement as a catalyst in the Mughal period. What distinguishes the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ from other Sufi masters is the fact that instead of discussing Sufism alone he focuses on almost entire gamut of human life with reference to social, political, religious and metaphysical dimensions. In his epistles one hears the Prophetic voice which makes all esoteric things, fleeting visions and experiential states subservient to the revelational shariah. And this not only wards off all heretic insinuations but makes his argument convincing and categorical.

In the following are given English renderings of some of the Mujaddid's epistles from the first volume.

EPISTLE-1

The letter written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, spiritual guide of the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, deals with the states which are compatible with Az-Zahir (the Apparent), one of the attributive names of Allah. It throws light upon a peculiar form of manifestation of Divine Unity, the heights which he experienced during his spiritual journey, degrees of heaven and ranks of certain saints revealed to him.

As directed by your holiness, I, the humblest Ahmad, beg to relate what is thrilling to me. During traversing the Path I had the vision of the glory of Divine Name Az-Zahir in its different manifestations till He revealed Himself by way of a specific illumination in all things separately. He unveiled Himself particularly in the guise of women, rather in each of their bodily limbs and I became extremely docile to the fair sex. Indeed, I was just helpless in this. The irradiation of the Apparent in this guise was unique and its bewitching beauties were not witnessed by me in any other manifestation. Their pull had entirely swept me off.

Similarly, the revelation of the Apparent occurred separately in edibles and costumes. The elegance of delicious and sumptuous dishes was not relished by me in any other dish, and the same difference marked the sweet and saltish water. Rather each savoury and sweet thing had a singular quality of its own. I simply find myself unable to put the peculiarities of this illumination to writing, perhaps I could relate all this in your presence.

Yet during the vision of these manifestations I remained keen for the Worthiest Companion and was almost indifferent to them. Since I was in a state of ecstasy, their impact could not be resisted altogether. Meanwhile, it was revealed to me that this irradiation was not incompatible with the Transcendent relation (Nisbat) and my inner self was still in its grip and absolutely unmindful of what lay in view. The Apparent burst upon my outwardness which was previously not aware of the pull of the Transcendence. Indeed, my inner self, as I sensed, was divested of every erratic streak and benumbed to all that which was floating on the surface. The outer self, prone to multiplicity and duality, sought out blessedness in the wake of these revelations.

After some duration this state came to an end and the previous mood of amazement and unawareness prevailed upon

me. All that vanished in such a way as if it had never existed. Afterwards a peculiar form of extinction occurred and no doubt that gnostic individuation, which followed that of the Essence, merged into it, leaving no traces which could project the egotistic illusion. In this state the effects of pure Islam began to emerge and those of covert polytheism – hypocrisy and gratification of the lower self – began to staper off. In the same way my deeds and intentions began to lose their credibility. To be brief, the signs of servanthood and self-negation started reclaiming their hold. May Allah, through your spiritual attention, enable me to reach the essence of servanthood? These spiritual ascensions take place frequently. During the first such experience the heavenly vistas were opened upon to me in their full magnitudes and an idea struck my mind that I should witness stations of some of the blessed souls. And when I became attentive their graded hierarchy, as determined by their devotional attitudes, came into my focus.

The ascension took place again. The privileged station of the Lord of Prophecy (ﷺ), the graded stations of all other prophets, the Sublime Assembly, the first four Caliphs, Prophet's descendants, orthodox Imams and eminent Sufis all came to my vision.

This great ascension, right from the centre of the earth up to the empyrean, culminated in the station of his holiness Khawaja Bahauddin Naqashband. Just above him were stationed the celebrities like Sheikh Marauf Karkhi and Sheikh Abu Saeed Kharaz, while others rested in the same station. However, below this station were saints like Sheikh Ala-ud-Dolah and Sheikh Najmauddin Kubra. Seated above them were outstanding luminaries, Prophet's progeny, and the four Caliphs respectively. The stations of all other prophets were aside from that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and so were those of the highly-placed angels. As for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his station was the highest of all. Allah is well aware of the nature of His scheme of things.

However, whenever I wish the ascension is granted to me by the grace of Allah, and sometimes it happens all unintentionally and certain Divine secrets are unveiled. And on occasions results and directives flow out of an ascension. Often I forget the details and I earnestly desire that I should pen down some of the revelations in order to mention them while writing a letter to you. Yet this does not seem to be possible because as a matter of fact I do not give much importance to them. Writing of them aside, I ought to shun them like anything. Even during writing this letter I remembered certain things

which had been revealed to me, but when it was finished, everything slipped out of my memory. For this reason I deemed it improper to allude to them.

Mullah Qasim Ali is placed in a better spiritual state and enjoys a blissful ecstasy. He has outreached all rapturous stages of self-vision. First he would witness Divine attributes within his psyche but now he feels them self-subsistent and finds no trace within it. Also he perceives that the light, which sustains them, is not traceable within his inner self, rather it stands detached. The states of other friends are also gaining progress. God willing, will write you a detailed letter next time.

EPISTLE-2

The letter, written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, touches upon the topic of spiritual edification and pride for Divine favours.

I, the humblest Ahmad, beg to say that Maulana Shah Mohammad conveyed to me your word, when the auspicious month of Ramadan was approaching, that I should perform Istikharah (divination). Since I had no spare time to pay you a visit during Ramadan, I had to postpone it for a month or so. I cannot express my gratitude to you for the Divine favours which have been incessantly descending upon me on account of your spiritual attention:

من آن خاتم که ابر نو بهاری
کند از لطف بر من قطره باری
اگر بر روید از تن صد زبانم
چو سبز شکر لطفش کی توانم

“I am that handful of dust upon which rain falls spontaneously in the spring season. Even if I acquire hundreds of tongues like foliage, I would not be able to express my gratitude”.

I am afraid that one may take it as audacity and bragging if I disclose what lies at my heart:

ولی چون شاه مرا برداشت از خاک
سزدگر بگذرانم سرز افلاک

“But as the King has lifted me from dust, it befits me that I should raise my head sky-high”.

I have been exposed to sobriety (Sehv) and subsistence (Baqa) since the concluding days of lunar month Rabbi-ul-Awwal and experience special subsistence each time. The beginning has been made by Divine Self – illumination Shaykh Mohiyuddin (Ibne Arabi) stands for, and I oscillate between sobriety and inebriety (Sukr). During shuttling between ascension and descension new realities and gnostic subtleties dawn upon me, and each time I have special vision and beneficence, commensurate with the maintenance of my new station.

On the 6th of Ramadan I underwent such an abiding experience of sincerity and beneficence which could not be expressed in words. I think that was the zenith of my aptitude and I also experienced there the kind of union that was harmonious to my inner layout with the direction of self-vision being fully patterned. my meditation in Allah has accordingly commenced. A perfect subsistence directly results from a

thorough absorption in God, and this in turn provides a sound basis to sobriety or self-consciousness. In its wake will come immense gnostic knowledge within the shariah framework. As prophets were seated in the highest stage of sobriety, from them emanated the knowledge and religious sciences which concerned the shariah injunctions and creeds pertaining to the Being of Allah, and His attributes. The fading inebriety affects my inner acceptance of their outwardness. The latest outflow mostly concerns occult mysteries and religious sciences and their illustrations. As a result, my exoteric knowledge is growing into revelational knowledge and the summative knowledge is becoming particularized:

گر بگویم شرح این بے حد شود

“If I elucidate, it will overreach limitations”.

I am afraid that things may not outstretch restraint and

بندہ باید کہ حد خود داند

“Man must know his limitations”.

EPISTLE-3

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ about some devotees who could not go further at a certain stage and those who went beyond it and witnessed the Unveiling of the Essence.

All seekers of the way, I may submit, who are here or with you have stopped at a certain stage. It is a difficult task to help them out. At least I lack the capability to cope with the problem. May Allah they make headway by the blessing of your attention! One of my disciples has progressed out of his station and reached the preliminary stage of divine Self – Illumination. His state is appreciable and he follows in my footprints. I am also optimistic about others. Some of the seekers who are away from here, are not in tune with the elect, rather they are on the pattern of ascetics. To say the least, it is more than enough that they have attained. They should be disciplined on the lines of ascetics:

ہر کسی را بہر کاری ساختہ

“Everybody is attuned to a peculiar job”.

I have avoided to mention their names individually because you must be knowing them. The day I penned down this letter Meer Sayyed Shah Hussain saw in his contemplation as if he had reached a gate. He was told that it was the Gate of Wonder “When I peep into the gate,” he says, “both you and the Holy Prophet ﷺ come to my view. I try my best to enter the gate but my feet defy me”.

EPISTLE-5

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, in favour of one of the sincere and devoted disciples by the name of Khawaja Burhanuddin.

I wish to submit in all humility that I have written a treatise on Naqshbandiyah masters that has been dispatched to you for your kind perusal. Since Khawaja Burhan left hurriedly I could not manage to maintain a copy of the manuscript. I am thinking to include other subjects in it also. One day I happened to have a bird's-eye view of the treatise, Silsalatul Ihrar and thought that I should request you to write down something on its contents or order me to do that. I had taken it into my head but in the meantime some ideas of this manuscript dawned upon me. Some themes of your treatise have been summatively treated by me in this manuscript which may possibly be tagged upon as an appendix with yours or you are also at liberty to pick out some illustrations from the manuscript and associate them with Silsalatul Ihrar. I deem it as an impropriety to write further.

Khawaja Burhan has done his best during the period and also benefited to some extent from the third stage of

contemplation (Sayr) which is attuned to self-vision. Khawaja Burhan is dissatisfied with his economic condition in Malwa and is coming to you. Whatever you will say will be beneficial to him.

EPISTLE-10

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, throwing light on the connotations of nearness and remoteness, and separation and union in Sufi terminology.

I say it in all humility that for long I haven't heard something about how do fare the devotees of your holiness and I have been keenly awaiting any information in this connection:

جہی نیست اگر زندہ شود جان عزیز
چوں از آن یار جدا مانده پیای برسد

“Little wonder that I acquire a new life if I receive a message from a friend sitting at a long distance”.

I know that I am not worthy of you company:

این بس کہ رسد ز دور بانگ جرم

“Yet this is enough that I should keep hearing the sound of the bell from a remote place”.

Strangely, extreme remoteness (from Allah) is termed as nearness and utmost separation as union, perhaps as a matter of fact the Sufi masters have alluded to the negative of nearness and union:

كيف الوصول الى ما دونها

قلل الجبال و دونهن خيوف

“How should I reach my friend because daunting mountains and caves stand in the way”.

I am unable to escape perpetual worry and so I want that the object should follow what the seeker desires and the beloved should become lover with the love of the lover. Prophet Mohammad, chief of the two worlds ﷺ in spite of being an object of love himself, is counted among lovers and seekers. The Prophet, it is reported, was always overwhelmed by grief and sadness. A tradition tells us “The Prophet has said that the affliction, to which he was subjected, had never been suffered by any other prophet”. Only lovers can bear the sting of love and not the beloved. This tale has no end:

قصة العشق لانفسام لها

“There is no end to the story of love”.

Sheikh Allah Bakhsh, the bearer of this letter, is overpowered by a sort of love and ecstasy. Insisted by him I have written a few sentences to you, evincing his keenness to see you he has set off. First he disclosed some other intentions but when he sensed my unconcern he simply agreed to seeing you. It will be a discourtesy on my part if I prolong the letter.

EPISTLE-12

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ about extinction (Fana) and subsistence (Baqa) and meditation (Sayr) on Allah and illuminative flash of the Essence.

I, the humblest Ahmad, don't know what to say about my shortcomings. Whatever Allah wanted came into being, and whatever He did not want remained non-being. None can abstain from excesses and sins till one is aided by the Glorified Allah.

Mysteries pertaining to the stages of extinction and subsistence have been revealed to me by Allah out of His sheer grace. Similarly the underlying realities of causationism, meditation (Sayr) on Allah, lightning emanation of the essence, the Mohammad vein Sufis and of other such things have been opened up to me along with all that which is relevant to each stage. Hardly anything, identified by Sufi masters, has been left out during my visions. Indeed none can attain to Divine Presence by dint of one's effort. (It is a matter of pure grace of Allah). As I believe the nature or essence of each thing is the creation of Allah so I attribute people's aptitude and

intelligence to His creativeness. Yet none can bring Allah within grasp by virtue of one's intellectual strength; nor anything can prevail upon Him. I can't dare write more:

بندہ باید کہ حد خود داند

“Man should know his limitations.”

EPISTLE-13

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, saying that the Sufi Path was unending and that there was complete harmony between esoteric and shariah sciences.

I, the humblest Ahmad, submit with a sense of secret that there is no end to this Path; I am journeying along it very swiftly with exuberant inspirations and Divine favours and so observe great masters that progress towards Allah needs fifty thousand years. “(Whereby) the angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years” (Quran LXX 4). The Quranic verse perhaps refers to this meaning. When I was bereft of all hope, the following verse provided with me an inspiration: “And He it is who sendeth down the saving rain after they have despaired, and spreadeth out His mercy” (Quran XLII: 28).

Recently a meditation (Sayr) has occurred in the corporeal world and seekers of guidance and disciples have again clustered round me in all seriousness. To be brief, I have taken up the job of their spiritual direction, though I am still

unable to do it. Yet owing to their insistence civilized ways prevent me from keeping them at a distance.

About the question of the Unity of Being, (Tawhid Wujudi) as intimated you several times, I was uncertain and believed that all actions and attributes originated from the One. When I got to the bottom of the matter the uncertainty was removed and the Unity of Being seemed to be outweighed by Perceptual of Unity (Tawhid Shuhudi) with its striking perfection. And so I perceived the reality of actions and attributes in a different shade. Each thing came into my vision in its totality and this removed all doubts. All revelational knowledge was at one with the shariah injunctions without the least discrepancy. The revelations of some Sufis, contravening the shariah, are either mistaken or emanate from a state of intoxication, otherwise the esoteric and the exoteric are not at variance at all. However, there is a need to explain away and settle the contradictions which the wayfarer (Salik) meets while journeying along the path. As for the accomplished gnostic, he sees a harmony between theology and what he experiences inwardly. The only difference between theologians and Sufi teachers is this that while the former reach the shariah truths on the basis of their reasoning and knowledge, the latter perceive them through their inner experience and intuition. What more

cogent argument can be given to establish the veracity of Sufis' inward feeling than the harmony under reference.

The Quranic verse, "And I shall be embarrassed, and my tongue will not speak plainly", mirrors my true condition. I don't know what should I relate as I can't speak of certain things? Nor can letters even afford a room for them, perhaps there will be a mystery behind it. Please don't deprive me of your kind treatment as my plight is miserable, nor leave me all alone on the way:

این سخن را چون تو مبدأ بودی ای
گر نزول گردد تو اش افزوده ای

"Since you have triggered off the talk, it will gain momentum by dint of you only".

I can't be too audacious to write in detail:

بنده باید که حد خود داند

"Man should confine himself to his limitation".

EPISTLE-17

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ with reference to spiritual ascension and descension.

I seek your kind permission to submit that some companions had stuck up for some time to make spiritual progress. Yet the day I wrote this letter it appeared that after progressing a bit further they had started descending. However, they are still in the process. As for other companions who were below this station, they too are prone to descending following their ascension. I will intimate you as soon as a new development takes place.

It will be better if the seaker himself consigns to writing what he has gone through, because the whole affair is of much importance. Since I had grown weak on account of taking a purgative, I was held back from penetrating into the aftermath of this descension. God willing, it will come to light soon.

EPISTLE-19

It was written to Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, supporting the case of some needy devotees.

I wish to submit that an army man has reported that the Kharif crop money, meant for stipendiaries from Delhi and Sirhind, has been delivered to your disciples so that after thorough probe it may be given to those who deserve it. Kindly let me say that a stipend of rupees one thousand is fixed for Sheikh Abu-ul-Hassan, a religious scholar and Hafiz (one who has memorised the Holy Quran), and rupees one thousand for Sheikh Shah Mohammad Hafiz. Undoubtedly both of them are alive and they have sent a dependable man as evidence. The stipends of these two persons, if the news stated above is true, may please be given to the bearer of this chit. Both these persons are present at Sirhind.

EPISTLE-20

It was also written by the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ to his Sheikh about the same matter.

I humbly beg to say that this letter is a follow-up of the ones which have repeatedly been dispatched to you about the stipends of Habibullah Sirhindi's wife, his mother and other elderly people. If the money of these stipendiaries has been sent to Delhi, Maulana Ali may please be instructed by you to give assurance to them.

Some of the stipendiaries have personally reached while others have sent their representatives. And in case the money has not been received, the applicants, who are alive, request to correct the edicts. To say further will be insolence on my part.

EPISTLE-23

It was written to Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan, a versatile genius and celebrity of the Akbar period, impressing upon him that the initiation of a seeker by an imperfect guide could be harmful, and also that un-Islamic modes of addressing must be forsaken.

May Allah, for the sake of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), save all of us from empty words and hollow knowledge (Amen) and bless that man who amens to this prayer!

The blessed and sincere brother gave me your letter cautiously and talked about you as far as he could. When I listened to all that I recited the following verse:

“Hail my beloved and the messenger of my beloved!

The visit of thy messenger is tantamount to seeing you”.

O brother, you are possessed of the potentialities of accomplishment and may Allah enable you to put them into effect! No doubt the world, as you know, is the field of the hereafter. Unfortunate is the man who did not sow anything in to it, let the land of his aptitude remain waste and wasted the

seed of actions. Let me say the waste of land has two aspects: firstly, nothing should be sown into it, and secondly, an inferior seed should be put into it. Obviously, the second form is more harmful and dangerous than the first one because in the analogical sense it will mean that one should seek initiation from an imperfect guide and follow his way, but he is governed by his own desires and as a result unable to rise above himself. And if at all he is able enough to exercise some influence, the result will be negative. The seeker's carnal desires will further increase with his soul-stain being aggravated.

Furthermore, an incompetent wayfarer (Salik) is unable to differentiate between the ways which lead to Allah and the ones which lead astray because he himself is not in communion with Allah. Similarly, he is deficient in determining different aptitudes of seekers and owing to his ignorance of rapture (Jazbah) and contemplation (Saluk) he will begin to guide a disciple on contemplative lines whereas temperamentally he is suited to rapture or ecstasy. Since he himself is misled, he will also mislead the seeker.

When the misguided seeker will be given to the care of a well-versed Shaykh, he will, first of all, try to do away with the harm he has suffered at the hands of the unskilled Shaykh. Afterwards, in accordance with the seeker's aptitude, he will

infuse a pure germ into his psyche and a positive result will crop up. The Quran says, "And the similitude of a bad saying is as a bad trees, uprooted from upon the earth, possessing no stability", and, "A godly saying, as a good tree, its root get firm, its branches reaching into heaven".

Indeed, the company of an adept Shaykh is like red sulphur or elixir (something unique), his look a medicine and his words are healer, and there is futile hardship without him. May Allah keep all of us steadfast on the Prophetic shariah! Because the observance of the Shariah is the real thing and on it centre salvation and auspiciousness as a poet says:

"Arabian Prophet Mohammad ﷺ is the honour of the two worlds-dust be on the head of that man who is not the dust of his door"! Let me end the argument on the blessings of the Chief of Prophets ﷺ.

Surprisingly, one of the learned poets who associates with you, says the veracious messenger, uses the pen-name of Kufri (association with kufr or disbelief), though he belongs to a noble, Sayyed family. I wish if I had known what prompted him for this bad name, the bad meaning of which is obvious. A Muslim is supposed to eschew this name more than a killer-lion and despise it like anything. This name and the man who

has this name are both disapproved and contemptible in the eyes of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. The Muslims are enjoined not to be on terms with infidels, rather hard on them, so it is compulsory to shun such bad names.

Yet some Shaykhs, under overpowering inebriety, have uttered words in praise of infidelity and stressed to tie up Brahman's thread. Such other outpourings are also ascribed to them. We shall have to interpret and justify them, digressing from their apparent meanings. The words of the inebriated Sufis are always taken in a good sense and their literal meanings are not relied upon. They are exempted from reproach for such forbidden utterances owing to their state of inebriation, otherwise they fully know that infidelity, as compared to Islam, is divested of all truth. As for those who simulate inebriety, both theologians and saints believe they are subject to accountability. Because everything is conditioned by particular season and time, it looks good or bad according to the changing situations and a wise man doesn't take them alike.

Kindly request him on my behalf to change the pen-name and substitute it for another good and Islamic one as this will be compatible with the Muslim way of life. It will reflect an association with the Islamic faith which has been sanctioned by Allah and His chosen Prophet ﷺ. Also it helps steer clear

of the calumny we have been warned of as the Prophet ﷺ says, "This saying is true and beyond any doubt. And Allah says in His Book, "... For Lo! A believing slave is better than an idolater...." I salaam that man who follows guidance!

EPISTLE-24

Written to Mohammad Quleej Khan, a renowned and pious Governor of Mughal period, it highlights the fact that a Sufi apparently lives among his fellow-humans yet inwardly he is in union with Allah. To be sure, the heart cannot be engrossed in more than one thing simultaneously, and it is a prerequisite of love that the lover take pleasures and torments alike when received from his beloved. The letter distinguishes between the worship of perfect saints and that of ascetics, and similarly shows how different are ecstasies from those deputed on the spiritual training of others.

May Allah you live in peace through the intermediation of his favourite Prophet Mohammad ﷺ ! Man, as goes the Hadith, keeps the company of only that person whom he loves. Logically, chosen and favoured is the man whose heart reflects nothing but the love for God Almighty and who only seeks after him. Therefore, such a man, in spite of dealing with people, remains with the Creator. This is how a true Sufi behaves; seemingly he lives among people but from the core of his heart he is disengaged from them and lives in God.

In fact, the human heart can be immersed in one thing at a time and so a God –oriented man will be indifferent to everything else. Despite the multiplicity of sensuous desires and relationships, aspirations for wealth, praiseworthiness and social distinction etc., man's object is his own psyche. The love of all these things emerges from self-love because he aims at them for self-gratification and not for their own sake. And when he will gain self-control and consequently stop pampering wishes, he will be no more tied up with earthly things. This is why it is said that his own egotism is a veil between man and God and not the world itself because it is not his goal. Undoubtedly, man's object is his own self which grows into a veil to him and not anything else. Unless he observes total self-denial, God cannot be his goal nor His love can be infused into man's heart. This coveted reward comes when the seeker develops a sense of complete non – being and this is, however, subject to the Unveiling of the Essence. Because unless the sun appears in its full shine, darkness cannot fully fade away.

When this love, known as the love for the Essence, is developed the reward and distress coming from the beloved mean the same thing to the lover. In such state he worships Allah for Allah's sake and not for the sake of his own soul. To

put it like this, his worship rises above the greed of award or the fear of adversity as both states are equal in his eyes. This status is confined only to those who are nearer Allah, and as for ascetics, they worship Allah owing to fear or greed on the denial of the love of the Essence to them, and this betrays a hidden sense of self-indulgence. Quite logically, the virtues of the latter stand as negative points for the former, whereas the virtues of the former are pure virtues. However, some of the perfected saints, even after attaining perfection and consequent reversion to earthly affairs, worship Allah without fear and greed. Yet this does not emanate from egocentricity, rather is directed towards winning God's pleasure and evading His displeasure.

The first group yearns for paradise as it is a place of Allah's choice, and not as a display of self-seeking. Similarly, they are scared of the horrors of hell for being a place of His displeasure and not in view of disburdening their souls of any haunting sense of misfortune. The reason is that these saints have been liberated from subservience to their lower selves and enjoy an unflagging contact with Allah. This is the highest stage of nearness to Him and after its attainment a Sufi fully benefits from the Prophetic excellence. And one who fails to revert to the mundane is deemed as a God-intoxicated Sufi or

an ecstatic. He is simply unable to benefit from what has been stated above, nor, unlike the former, can he perform the task of spiritual direction.

May Allah grant us the love of the perfected saints through the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his descendants and Companions. No doubt, man adheres only to that person whom he loves. Let me offer my Salaam to you.

EPISTLE-25

It was written to Khawaja Jehan, father-in-law of Emperor Jehangir, persuading him to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and those of the four Caliphs.

May Allah bless your heart, expand your bosom, purify you soul and remove your stiffness! All this, and also the perfections of spirit (Ruh), hidden consciousness (Sirr), inner consciousness (Khafi) and innermost consciousness (Akhfa) depend on obedience to the Chief of Prophets ﷺ. So you are supposed to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and those of the orthodox Caliphs who, after receiving prophetic guidance, became guides to people. They are the stars of guidance (as tradition tells us) and suns of sainthood. Blessed is the man who follows them and totally misled is that person who is entrenched in his opposition to them.

Both sons of the late Sheikh Sultan (father-in-law of the Mujaddid) are in dire financial straits. You are requested to help them as you are in a position to do so. May Allah bless you with goodness and enable you to meet the needs of more

and more people! I greet you and all other people who are on the path of righteousness.

EPISTLE-26

It was written to Sheikh-ul-Alam Maulana Haji Mohammad Lahori, a famous scholar of his time, saying that ascetics were more enthusiastic than the accomplished saints.

May Allah keep all of us steadfast in observing the Prophetic Shariah "Let it be known to you, "as reports a Divine saying, "ascetics have grown too much impatient to see Me and I am even more fond of them. "Here Allah confirms the eagerness of ascetics because the zeal of the elect cools up after reaching Him. Eagerness persists as long as the goal is not reached, whereas the latter have reached their goal. Man as we see, has intense self-love yet he is not keen on his self as it is not out of his reach.

The gnostic who enjoys Allah's co-existence with self-denial may be likened to man versus self. This proves that only ascetics are eager because they seek their Object; and they are the ones who lack direct awareness of Allah, whether being in the beginning of the Path or in its middle or away from the middle in the minutest way. A Persian verse well conveys the truth:

فراق دوست اگر اندک است اندک نیست
درون دیده اگر نیم موت بسیار است

“Separation from the friend, even for a brief duration, is as unbearable as a small hair in the eye”.

Caliph Abu Bakr Siddiq رضی اللہ عنہ, it is reported, saw a man who was reciting the holy Quran and weeping. He observed, “We too used to behave like this but now our hearts have hardened.” His remark was a self-praise in the guise of self-blaming (being an elect of the highest order his ecstasy had faded away). And I have heard my master (Khawaja Baqi Billah) say this. “No doubt many a time an accomplished gnostic longs for the rapturous states which he used to enjoy as a novice.” There is a higher and more perfect stage which involves the loss of enthusiasm where one feels the inadequacy of perception. A man is zealous in case he is hopeful of achieving his object and becomes unenthusiastic when there is no hope.

No fervour can be pumped into a most perfect saint despite the fact he regains consciousness of the world after scaling utmost spiritual heights with his goal still baffling him. The loss of his fervency results from disillusionment and not from the inaccessibility of the goal and even descension hardly

cheers up his heart. Yet the case of the accomplished saint, mentioned earlier, is quite different. His emotional warmth, which had been lost as a result of absorption, resurges through his mind following his descension. Because the effort for attaining the unachieved Object calls for enlivenment of the heart. This is not to be implied here that the stages of reaching Allah are everlasting, but it is enough to keep an elect zestful that some of the stages are ever attainable. In fact the unending stages of Allah's cognition centre on the particularized mediation (Sayr) concerning His Names, attributes, modes and considerations. A wayfarer (Salik) of this particular region is unlikely to reach the highest point of gnosis and this is what helps him to maintain his zest. Yet I am alluding to a gnostic of the highest order who goes through these stages in a summative way and reaches such a zenith which is inexpressible, nor can one can point to it. No hope can be cherished there and consequently he is deprived of all eagerness and inquisitiveness.

This is the status of the privileged saints who rise above from the narrow valley of attributes and reach the Divine Presence, contrary to the ones who meditate on the Divine attributes in detail and perceive His modes in proper order. They are shackled up in the orbit of attributive manifestations

and this simply narrows down their cognitive vision, whereas only a summative vision of attributes and considerations can lead the seeker to Allah. And he who meditates on Names in detail, is clogged up in attributes and consideration while retaining his fervour and quest along with raptures. To sum up, ecstasies are to be associated with attributive manifestations with glimpses of unveiling of the Essence being denied to them till they shift from this state.

One may question here that since nothing is hidden from Allah, what does signify His eagerness (as mentioned in the Sacred utterance)? Let me reply that this word may have been uttered by Him in the attributive context. As Allah is All-Powerful and Omnipotent whereas man is just weak and helpless, any utterance on His part will suggest a sense of force as we examine in this case. This answer is in the theological vein, yet personally I would like to defuse the problem in several ways on the Sufi pattern. This, however, calls for a sort of inebriety without which neither any utterance is recommendable nor permissible. The God-intoxicated Sufis are excusable but those who are self-possessed, can't escape accountability. Since I am in a perfect state of sobriety, I am not supposed to open my lips. This is a matter of fact. Praise be to Allah only and ceaseless salutations to His Prophet!

EPISTLE-28

It was written to Khawaja Amack about an exalted state but couched in such words as give out a sense of descension and remoteness from Allah.

I was immensely pleased to receive and read your kind letter. What a blessing that liberated souls should remember the descending ones! What a prized gift that those who enjoy a state of union should sympathise with the ones who suffer the pangs of ¹ separation (following descension). A poor soul, losing hope of union, took refuge in a recess of disunion, and retreating from a point of nearness, sought solace in that of remoteness. Or he preferred disunion to union, and after being delinked from the non-God resought the linkage of the non-God (in submission to the divinewill):

“When the King of Faith wants ‘greed’ from me, then to hell with patience”.

Let me not vex you further with my disjoined sentences and vague allusions.

May Allah grant us perseverance in following the Holy Prophet ﷺ!

EPISTLE-37

It was written to Sheikh Mohammad Chatri, a deputy of the Mujaddid and one of the renowned saints of his time, persuading him to follow in the footprints of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and acquire the Naqshbandiyah *Nisbat* (Energy - line).

I was much glad to read your kind letter. You had aspired for perseverance and adhering to the Naqshbandiyah chain. Thank God, for this. May Allah bestow upon you great spiritual heights by blessings of the saints of this exalted chain! Their method is an elixir and attuned to the observance of Prophetic sunnah.

As for my own psychic state, esoteric revelations and subtleties and inspirations had been streaming into my heart for a long time. My task was accomplished by the Grace of Allah. Now I have nothing to aspire for except that I should endeavour to revive any sunnah of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and let ecstasies keep indulging in their psychic states and ecstasies.

It will be appreciable if you galvanize your inner self by dint of the spiritual *Nisbat* (Energy – line) of Naqshbandiyah

saints and refine the mode of your outward behaviour by following in the Prophetic footprints:

کار نیست غیر این ہر یق

“This is the real thing and the rest is just scum”.

You must offer your five-time Prayers in time except in winter it is recommendable to delay the night Prayer till the one-third night ends. I am just helpless in this matter as I can't afford the slightest delay in offering Prayer. However, exceptional cases can be rules out.

EPISTLE-39

It was also written to Sheikh Mohammad Chatri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, telling him that it was a wholesome heart which ensured success in the way, and not mere rituals and soulless prayers.

May Allah, through the channel of his beloved Prophet (ﷺ), who is immune from ¹ squinting, disengage you from the non-God and attract you towards Himself!

Things depend on the heart, if it is immersed in the non-God, there can be little hope of betterment. Merely ostentatious virtues and ritual prayers do not matter. We need two things to save the heart from inclining towards the non-God and to do good actions as ordained by the shariah. None can claim of a pure heart if good physical actions are not done. As soul without body is unimaginable in the wordly life, so is an illumined heart without virtuous deeds. Many an atheist makes bogus claims contrary to this fact.

May Allah safeguard us against such heresies for the sake of His beloved Prophet (ﷺ)!

EPISTLE-40

It was also written to Sheikh Mohammad Chatri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ impressing upon him the necessity of sincerity which was one of the three vital elements of the shariah. The Way and Reality are both subordinate to the shariah to mature up this element. Some other things like this were also discussed.

We adore Allah and send blessings on His Prophet and salute him. My dear sir, the experience of the Path and self-vision has revealed that the real aim is to integrate all this into complete sincerity which is subject to vanquishing our passions both on external and internal planes.

Sincerity is a vital ingredient of the shariah, the other two ingredients being knowledge and practice. Certainly, the Path and Reality are the shariah agents in maturing up sincerity. This is the real subject yet everybody can't perceive it. People usually cherish baseless notions and they are complacent with all that which has little worth.

What is essence of the shariah and forms basis of the Path and Reality is beyond their comprehension. The shariah, they say, is simply the skin while Reality is the marrow but

they are ignorant of the matter of truth. They mistakenly rely on the inebriated outpourings of Sufis and sing songs of their spiritual states and stations. May the Glorified Allah show them the straight path and peace be with us and his pious slaves!

EPISTLE-42

The letter, written to Sheikh Dervish, a dignitary of the Mughal period, suggested that the best way to remove the rust of the non-God from the heart was to follow the sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

May Allah you live long! Man can never be united with the Creator as long as he retains the impurities of temporal involvements. The seeker is supposed to sand off the rust of the non-God from his heart which is the seat of the Divine Command. And this is subject to total commitment to the Prophetic sunnah which alone can help shed off carnal desires and unholy rituals.

“There is a god tiding for the person who is blessed with this beatitude and unlucky is one who remains deprived of it”.

To come to the point, brother Mian Muzaffar, son of the late Sheikh Ghoran, belongs to a noble and pious family. He has large dependants and his plight is miserable. No more vexing. I salute you and those who tread the righteous path.

EPISTLE-49

It was also written to Sheikh Farid, persuading him to polish his outward behaviour by observing the Shariah rules and liberate his inner self from the non-God.

May Allah bestow upon you objective and subjective blessings! The former means man's surrender to the injunctions of Prophetic Shariah. While the latter symbolizes the liberation of his inner self from all that which is other than God. Let us see who is the lucky soul to be endowed with the two blessings?

کار لافست غیر این ہر بیچ

“Indeed, only this matters and everything else is just dross”.

I don't want to burden you with detail.

Salaam!

EPISTLE-50

It impresses upon Sheikh Farid the reality of this ignoble world.

May Allah rid you of all that which lacks roots in Him and affiliate you with Himself for the sake of his beloved Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, who is endowed with unswerving sight.

The world is outwardly sweet and attractive, yet in reality it is a deadly poison and worthless asset to aspire for. It is endearing to one who is mean and insensible. Its enchantments are like a gilded filth and it can be likened to a sugar-coated poisonous pill. A wise man resists the seductions of such deceptive and impure object. Orthodox ulema say, "If somebody makes a will that his belongings should be handed over to a sage, the recipient should be an ascetic who is disinclined towards the world and this reflects his wisdom". Let me not prolong my argument.

Aside from it, I want to invite your kind attention to the plight of reverend Sheikh Zikria (brother of writer's father-in-law Sheikh Sultan), a former Tehsildar, who despite his old age

is still in prison. But the worldly accountability, which is less hard than that of the Last Day, fills him with greater fear, and he considers you as a dependable and major source of help in the world. I hope the new office will also show that he is one of the subordinates of your excellency:

تو مرا دل ده و دلیری بین

و بہ خویش خوان و شیریں بین

“Give me your heart and see my valour. I am like a fox but witness my lion-heartedness”.

May Allah shower upon you exoteric and esoteric blessings through the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his sacred descendants!

EPISTLE-51

It was written to Sheikh Farid, persuading him to promote and popularise the shariah among people.

I pray to Allah that by the blessings of the Prophetic family's descendants, the fundamentals of the shariah and precepts of the Islamic Ummah may be strengthened and promoted:

کار اینست غیر این ہر بیج

“This is the real task, the rest is just nothing”.

Today the poor Muslims are caught up in a the vortex of undevoutness and their deliverance lies in the ¹ ark of the Holy Prophet's descendants.

“My descendants”, says a Tradition, “may be likened to Noah's ark. A person who gets into it will survive, and one who lags behind will perish”.

Please make the best use of your dynamism for it (promotion of the shariah), and surely it will be your good luck if you do it. To that you have, by the grace of God, full powers and dignity. You will surpass all others if this blessing is also

added to your nobility. Whenever the question arises to promote and support the shariah and other such things I concentrate upon you.

The Ramadan moon was sighted by me in Delhi. As I came to know about mother's willingness, I prolonged my stay till the recitation of the Holy Quran concluded. May Allah bestow upon you blessings in this world and also in the hereafter!

EPISTLE-53

It was written to Sheikh Farid, telling him that the self – seeking alone could generate confusion and miseries in the world.

May Allah you keep holding steadfastly to the line of your ancestors! I have heard that the King of Islam (Jahangir), being a good-natured Muslim, has ordered you, “seek out four pious ulema for the Royal Court to explain the shariah so that nothing happens contrary to Islam”. Praise be to Allah on it!

The Muslims and the grief - stricken will be too happy on this good news. I am myself, as mentioned repeatedly, looking up to you for the same purpose. Therefore, I cannot help speaking and writing in this connection. I hope you will excuse me as, it is said, “an interested man is crazy”.

Please let me say that God-fearing and shariah-oriented ulema, devoted to the cause of the Ummah and indifferent to rank and dignity, are a rarity. As for self-seeking ulema, each one of them will be motivated and project his own image in the King’s eyes by dint of hair-splitting. Obviously, the project of furbishing the faith will be lost to the wind. In the past

(Akbar's reign) too, the confrontation of ulema had exposed people to hardship and miseries. Today, almost the same situation has arisen. Evidently, there is little room for promoting the cause of the Revealed Law, instead it may be weakened. May Allah ward off this thing as well as the mischief of vicious ulema!

Rather it will be more advisable if only one theologian is selected for the job at hand. And if an otherworldly one is found, it will be a felicitous thing because his company will do wonders. If it is not possible, a better one among the materialistic ulema may be selected after careful thinking. A thing which cannot be achieved entirely, must not be forsaken altogether. I don't know what else should I write? As people's deliverance is tied up with ulema, the worldly loss also depends on them. 'The best among ulema is the best among humans, and the worst among them is the worst among humans. Ulema are the source of guidance. A saint saw that the damned Satan was sitting idle. When asked the reason, Satan replied, "At present, ulema are doing my job and they are sufficient for misleading others".

عالم کہ کامرانیِ دین پروری کند
ادوختنِ گم است کرا رہبری کند

The alim, who aims at worldly success and self-indulgence, is himself misled, not to speak of guiding others.

Hopefully a judicious step will be taken in this respect. If the matter gets out of hand, then there can be no remedy. Although I feel shy of discussing such things before wise and intelligent men, yet I trouble you viewing this object as my good luck.

EPISTLE-55

It was written to sheikh Abdul Wahab Bukhari (a Mughal Governor of Delhi) as an expression of love.

Of late I have developed in my heart a love for you, and this is apart from the past acquaintance. For this reason I have been praying for you in privacy. And as a Hadith says that one should declare one's love to a fellow-Muslim, I deemed it fit to let you know of the love I have for you. Moreover, the love of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has further boosted my hopes. May Allah, by virtue of the Prophetic blessings, keep me firm in the love for the Prophet's descendants!

EPISTLE-56

It was written to Sheikh Abdul Wahab Bukhari, recommending a Sayyed to him.

I simply find myself unable to adore the blessed Sayyeds because of their being the descendants of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Yet considering it as my good luck I feel encouraged to do so with a sense of pride as we have been ordained to love them.

“O Allah! Through the intermediary of the King of Prophets, your chosen friend, enable us to love the Sayyeds”.

Meer Sayyed Ahmad, the bearer of this letter, comes of the Samana Sayyed family. A pious man and seeker of the Way, he has been compelled by unavoidable circumstances to seek access to you. Your excellency is requested to accommodate him as he is a deserving case, or recommend him to any of your friends so that he may be relieved of economic hardship. Since I believe that you are prone to helping the needy and destitute people, particularly the Sayyeds, I have been inspired to write you briefly. Though he could not see me at the time of departure he is one of the devoted seekers. May

God grant him perseverance in love and sincerity! To write more will mean disrespect.

EPISTLE-57

It was written to Sheikh Mohammad Youaf, some dignitary, for the sake of advice.

May Allah enable you through the channel of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), to follow in the footsteps of your forefathers firmly as saintliness is your heritage! Put your life on such a pattern as matches your family reputation and this consists of following the shariah and adorning your inner self with the essence of the shariah, called as the Way. The two are not at variance with each other, as heretics fancy, rather are two sides of the same coin. I hold very good opinion about you as certain occasions evidence and I have also alluded to it to your father. To come to the point, Sheikh Abdul Ghani is a pious man and I hope you will pay attention to him if he contacts you. I end with salaam to you.

EPISTLE-62

The letter was written to Mirza Hasamuddin Ahmad, telling him that the compelling impulse preceding the Way was not the real aim, rather was a source of help to cover the stages of the Way easily. It was the driving impulse which followed the Way that was the goal.

Praise be to Allah and salaam to his chosen men! Direct awareness of Allah has two elements; compelling impulse (Jazbah) and the Way (Saluk), or in other words adjustment (Tasfiyah) and purification (Tazkiyah). The compelling impulse which occurs before treading the Path is not to be aimed at, and the adjustment which precedes purification is also not the real goal. Whereas the Divine attraction which comes in the end of the Way and the adjustment which takes place after purification, a phenomenon of stroll (meditation) in Allah, should be the focus of a seeker's concentration. The earlier compelling impulse or adjustment, which simply facilitates travel along the Way, is genuinely achieved in the end. The unveiling of the Unseen is tied up with the completion of spiritual journey, the first driving impulse seems to be

similar to the second one, but in fact both are different from each other.

When the Naqshbandiyah saints say that the goal is imbedded in the beginning in their pattern, they mean form and not substance. Otherwise the essence of the zenith cannot be packed into the nadir, the two states are absolutely unrelated to each other. I have thoroughly discussed this theme, compelling impulse and the Way, in another letter. To be brief, the seeker is supposed to pierce through the form and get into the essence as he will get away from his goal if he chooses to stick to the form.

May Allah keep us firm on the path of reality and save us from going astray for the sake of the Chief of Prophets and his pious descendants!

EPISTLE-71

It was written to Mirza Daraab Khan, son of Khan Khanan, telling him that a beneficiary was supposed to be grateful to his Beneficent but only by the way of observing the Shariah.

May Allah give you help and succour! Both rationally and theologically a beneficiary is under obligation to thank his beneficent and gratefulness should be proportionate to the dimension of blessing greater gratitude for greater blessing. As compared the destitute, many times gratefulness devolves upon the affluent measured by their hierarchy. That is why the indigent of the Ummah will go to paradise five hundred years earlier than the rich. And thankfulness to the real Beneficent (God) means that first one should rectify one's creeds according to those of the orthodox followers whose fate is linked to salvation. Secondly, one is apt to carry out the shariah rules on the lines of orthodox theologians. Thirdly, self-purification should be attained as suggested by Sufis of the Sunnite sect. The necessity of the last one, on which depends the perfection of Islam, comes auspiciously, whereas the first

two organs are fundamental and form the basis of Islam. Any action, which contravenes the three organs, will be sinful and tantamount to ungratefulness and disobedience of the real Beneficent, though it is in the form of rigorous disciplines and austerities.

The Indian Brahmans and Greek philosophers never lagged behind in abstinences and austerities but since such practices were incompatible with the Prophets' Revealed Laws, they were all condemned and deprived of salvation of the Last Day. As a consequence we have no other way than to submit ourselves to our intercessor and healer of hearts Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) and his orthodox Caliphs.

EPISTLE-72

It was written to Khawaja Jahan, saying that religion and the world cannot possibly be mingled up and a seeker is supposed to banish the latter from his heart.

May the Glorified Allah keep you safe and sound!

“If is a blessing if religion and the world are united” as both are at variance with each other. A seeker of the hereafter is supposed to forsake what is the mundane yet it is hard and impracticable in this age. The next choice is that of temperance which means the observance of the shariah rules with regard to temporal affairs. He is required to subordinate his lifestyle including food consumption, to the Revealed Law and avoid to overstep the limits. He must pay the poor tax (Zakat) on multiplying wealth and cattle as compatibility with shariah biddings will avert the danger of worldly misfortunes. In this way the world is fused into the hereafter. And a man, who neglects the necessary abstinence, can't be subject to discussion. He will be branded as a hypocrite. A mere faith won't do him any good on the Last Day, he simply enjoys a corporal safeguard:

من آنچه شرط باغ است باتو میگویم
تو خواه از خنم پند گیر خواه طالع

“Prompted by preaching zeal I give advice to you, whether you like it or not”.

Let us look to that fortunate man who, despite worldly pomp and show, including a train of servants and bodyguards, sumptuous dishes and elegant and costly clothes, lends a willing ear to truthful talk:

“My wailing is inaccessible to your ears which are burdened with pearls”.

گوشش از بارور گراں شده است
نشود ناله و فغان مرا

May Allah enable all of us to follow the Prophetic shariah!

To come to the point, Mian Sheikh Zikriya, a former Tehsildar, is in jail these days. He is a learned man yet owing to his bad luck he has been a prisoner for a long time. Being fed up with the weakness of old age, economic hardship and long imprisonment he has written me a letter, saying that I should visit the cantonment and do something for his release. A long distance prevents me from coming to you personally but my brother Khawaja Mohammad Siddique is paying you a visit. I am going to trouble you by writing a few sentences. I

hope you will pay your attention to the poor fellow who is
learned as well as aged. Salaam!

EPISTLE-74

It was written to Mirza Badiuzzaman, a descendant of Shaykh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, persuading him to love the saintly people and follow the Holy Prophet ﷺ

I have received your kind and refined letter which, thank God, reveals your love for Sufis and an inclination towards Sufism. Verily, these people have an association with Allah (as say Book and Tradition) and their associate cannot be illucky. Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, who would invoke victory from Allah through the intermediary of the indigent Mekkan refugees, has observed about them, "There are many people with ruffled and dusty hair who are driven away from the doors; but if they utter an oath, Allah definitely fulfils it.

O you the auspicious! Your letter contained a phrase, "The load of two worlds". This is such an adoration which is peculiar to the Self-existent only. A slave like me, who has nothing within his power, is not privileged enough to claim partnership with the Lord in any way and adopt the way of Lordship, particularly in the hereafter when all real or metaphoric ownerships will be associated with the Owner of

the Day of Judgment. On the Last Day the Glorified Allah will call out, "Whose is the sovereignty this day"?, then will Himself say in response, "It is Allah's, the One, the Almighty".

On that day men will display nothing but fear and horror, yet regret and repentance will be their lot. In the Quran God Himself speaks of the severity of that day and people's tremendous anxiety and restlessness". Lo! The earthquake of the Hour (of Doom) is a tremendous thing. On the day when ye behold it, every nursing mother will forget her suckling and every pregnant one will be delivered of her burden, and thou wilt see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong (upon them)".

"That day when there will be questioning of actions, even the heart of a resolute person will be trembling out of horror".

"When even prophets will be horror-stricken, how will thou seek pretext to your sins?"

Let me advise you that you should be resolute in your following of the Prophet (ﷺ) as salvation in the hereafter will be out of question without it. Be lest attentive towards the world's seductions, nor should you be concerned about worldly success or failure. Because the world is repugnant to Allah and matters nowhere in His estimate. So people should prefer its

non-existence to existence and stories of its transience and undependability are generally talked about and have rather come to observation. You should take lesson from the affairs of those who have preceded you. May Allah enable all of us to follow the Chief of Prophets ﷺ !

For the
Page No.

EPISTLE-75

It was also written to Mirza Badiuzzaman, telling him that well-founded beliefs and knowledge of basic theological rules were needed to follow the Prophet ﷺ

May Allah keep you safe and sound! Let you know it that the beatitude of the two worlds is glued to the obedience of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ as enunciated by orthodox theologians. May Allah reward them for their effort! First, one should rectify one's beliefs according to their correct opinions. The next thing to do is to know about things which are lawful (Halal) and unlawful (Haram), obligatory (Fard) and indispensable (Wajib), sunnah and recommendable (Mustahab) and permissible (Mubah) and dubious (Mushtabah) and then to put this knowledge inot practice. It is only after attaining to the two wings, doctrinal and practical, that one moves towards the celestial world, provided one enjoys the predestined Divine blessing. Otherwise one has to suffer pains in vain. It is inadvisable that we should have this paltry world and its assets at heart deeming it as one of our genuine goals. We should

only seek after Allah directly or indirectly by virtue of an indomitable willpower:

کار اینست غیر این همه بیج

“This is the real thing and everything else is just scum”.

As you have asked for prayer with full attention, let me convey the good news to you that you will bare this world with a wholesome heart. Yet there is a condition that you should have only one focal point to turn to, you will be simply confused in case you have many to seek recourse to. “He who is at one place”, as goes a proverb, “he is everywhere, and he who is everywhere, he is nowhere”. May Allah keep us unfaltering on the straight Prophetic shariah and bless that man who is the rightly guided and strictly obeys the Holy Prophet

ﷺ!

EPISTLE-81

It was written to Lalah Beg, a Mughal dignitary, persuading him to promote the cause of Islam as the Muslims were facing humiliation at the hands of non-believers.

May the Glorious God inspire all of us with Islamic fervour and sense of honour! For about a century Islam has been experiencing an impoverishment which has emboldened infidels to the extent that they are not only promulgating un-Islamic laws in Islamic cities but also bent upon eradicating all shariah commands and vestiges of Islam. If a Muslim dares to observe an Islamic rite, he is killed. The cow-slaughter, an outstanding Islamic rite in India, has finished, and the non-Muslims may be willing for payment of Jizyah (poll-tax levied on disbelievers) but they would never agree to cow-slaughter. It will be a welcome sign if the Islamic rites are given vogue to and the Muslims attain some standing in the opening period of kingship (of Jehangir). Otherwise, God forbid, if things are delayed, the Muslims will be facing a crisis. Help! Help! Help! Let us see who has the good luck to achieve this blessing and who is the valiant to seize upon this wealth? "That is the

bounty of Allah, which he giveth unto whom He will. Allah is of infinite bounty”, says the Quran.

May Allah keep all of us firm in obedience of the Chief of Prophets ﷺ !

EPISTLE-82

It was written to Sikandar Khan Lodhi to the effect that peace could not descend upon the heart unless the seeker became oblivious of the non-God and the writer interpreted this oblivion as absorption in Allah.

May Allah, for the sake of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), who had unswerving sight, keep us only with Him and not with anything else. All of us are supposed to keep our hearts devoid of everything except God, and this is subject to complete uprooting of the non-God. This high station has been interpreted as extinction in Allah when the non-God fails to worm into the heart even by a conscious attempt. Peace is not possible till things come to this point. Today this is unique, rather people will not believe if it is mentioned to them:

هنيئاً لأرباب النعيم نعيمها

وللعاشق المسكين ما يتجرع

“Let the inmates of paradise be happy with the heavenly blessings, and let the lover be given the draught of grief.”

What else should I write? Salaam first and last!

EPISTLE-83

It was written to Bahadar Khan, his real name being Abu-un-Nabi, who was of Iranian origin and held high posts in the periods of Akbar and Jehangir. The writer advises him to achieve self-possession, both internal and external, within the shariah framework.

May Allah, for the sake of the Chief of Prophets ﷺ absolve you from different involvements and entirely attach you to His Exalted Presence!

ہرچہ جز عشقِ خدائے احسن است
گرشکرِ خواریست آن جان کندن است

“Everything, which is apart from the love of good God, may seem to be sweet but in fact it causes spiritual death”.

It is a stupendous job if somebody moulds his outward behaviour into the Shariah cast and keeps his inner self with Allah. Let us see who is the lucky soul to be endowed with these two blessings? Today, the concentration of these two affinities, perhaps adherence to the shariah alone, is rarely possible. It is more unique than the red sulphur. May Allah, in

His infinite kindness, enable us to stick to the Prophetic sunnah strictly, both outwardly and inwardly!

EPISTLE-86

It was written to an officer, advising him to sweep out all attachments of his heart except Allah.

May Allah, through the intermediary of his favourite Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, bless us the observance of moderation and entice in the true spirit of perseverance! We are all under obligation to keep away the non-God from our hearts, and this is not possible till our hearts reflect nothing except Allah. Suppose if I live for one thousand years, the non-God won't be able to creep inadvertently into my heart which has indissolubly integrated into Allah:

کار اینست غیر این همه بیهوده

“This is what matters and everything else is just worthless”.

On last visit you had told me out of kindness that I could write you about any pressing need. This has encouraged me to put you to inconvenience. Sheikh Abdullah Sufi is a pious man and has come under debt owing to certain needs. I hope you will help him out of his debt. Salaam!

EPISTLE-87

It was written to Pehlwan Mahmood, telling him that it was extremely good luck of a man if he was accepted by a friend of Allah.

May Allah you live long and follow the Prophetic shariah steadfastly! The arrival of Sheikh Muzammil is the foremost good news for your family. The blessings of his company cannot be expressed in words. What a good luck that a friend of God should accept somebody. More so if love and nearness are bestowed on that fellow. "These (friends of Allah) are the people whose associate can never be unlucky", says a Tradition.

Anyhow, you should consider his company as a blessing and also observe the necessary etiquette to produce the desired effect. What else should I write? Salaam in the beginning and in the end!

EPISTLE-88

This letter was also written to Pehlwan Mahmood, saying that it was a great blessing that a youth should keep sticking to faith and goodness till his old age. The fear of God should overpower his youth and hope mark his old age.

May Allah be with you for ever! What a blessing that a man's black hair (youth) should grow grey (old age) with faith and piety! "A man who grows old with Islam, says a Tradition, is forgiven". Be inclined towards hope and be hopeful of forgiveness. Youth needs fear and hope should mark the old age. Salaam in the beginning and in the end.

EPISTLE-89

It was written to Mirza Ali Jan in connection with a condolence.

May Allah keep you firm on Prophetic Shariah! "Every soul will taste of death", says the Quran. So man cannot escape death. A Hadith says, "So there is a good news for that man who had long age and did a lot of good actions". This is death which becomes a source of meeting of two (dead) friends and also provides satisfaction to those who are desirous of meeting their Allah. "Whosoever looked forward to the meeting with Allah (let him know that), His reckoning is surely nigh". As for the rest of men, they have bad luck and also those who failed to achieve spiritual wealth and remained busy with worldly involvements till death overtook them. The late Wali Naimat was a godsend to people around him. Now you are under obligation to repay his good and provide succour to his soul by means of prayers and propitiatory offerings. To be sure, a dead body is like a drowning man and is always looking forward to the prayer he receives from father or mother or brother or friend.

Besides, we should take warning from his death and submit ourselves to Allah's will. The worldly life is just an illusion and its luxuries and comforts have no value at all, otherwise disbelievers would not have been given even a shred out of them. May the Glorified Allah provide subsistence to all of us and save us from all that exists other than Him by virtue of the reverence of the Chief of Prophets ﷺ.

EPISTLE-90

It was written to Khawaja Qasim رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, son of Khawaja Mohammad Amkanaghi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, Shaykh of Khawaja Baqi Billah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, telling him that one should be completely devoted to Allah and the acquisition of Naqshabandi *Nisbat* (Energy -line) was subject to selfless adoration.

May Allah! You get to your spiritual ambition by virtue of sovereign Prophetic favour by temporal seductions and the image of the hereafter be raised in your eyes! I received your kind letter along with valuable gifts. You were so kind. May Allah compensate you in a better way! I have only one single advice for friends and well-wishers; be devoted to God with full concentration and turn away from the non-God:

کار اینست غیر این ہمہ بیجا

“This is the real task and everything else is just scum”.

Today this great blessing is attainable in the Naqshbandi order, provided one is not short of devotion and sincerity of intention. The seeker can have it in a single sitting with Naqshbandi Shaykhs, whereas ascetic disciplines and austerities may not be a sufficient match to it. Because the end

is fused into the opening with them and they impart to the novice what the accomplished seekers of other orders achieve in the end. Their pattern is analogous to that of the Companions رضي الله عنهم who would attain in their first sitting with the Lord of Prophecy ﷺ what the elect of the way may hardly have in the latest stage. This speaks of fusion of the end in the opening. You must love Naqshbandi saints as all depends on love. Salutation be to you and the guided and those who follow Prophet Mohammad ﷺ.

EPISTLE-91

It was written to Sheikh Kabeer, a courtier of Akbar, about sound beliefs and virtuous actions which, the writer believed, were helpful in propelling the seeker's ascension towards the Permanent Sovereignty, saying both the shariah and the Way aimed at purification of the lower self and the heart.

May Allah bless all of us with firmness in the observance of Prophetic sunnah! First of all the seeker's beliefs should be in unison with those of the rightly-guided ulema as they are wedded to deliverance. Secondly, he should put his precepts and actions into the theological mould and cling to them strictly. He must not think of leaping forward towards the Heavenly Kingdom till he is well settled in these two aspects:

کار اینست غیر این همه پنج

“Nothing is worth consideration except this thing”.

Both the shariah and the Way aim at self-purification and wholesomeness of heart, and the true faith, on which depends salvation, is relevant to that. A sound heart is tied up with the eradication of the non-God and this condition must

stay even after the elapse of a millennium. This can only follow a complete oblivion of the non-God when even a willing diversion of the heart is not possible. This condition is interpreted as extinction and this is the first step towards the Ways. And without it is self-tormenting in vain. Salaam in the beginning and in the end!

EPISTLE-92

It was also written to Sheikh Kabeer, telling him that peace of mind resulted from Zikr or the remembrance of Allah, and not from logic and reasoning.

May the Exalted Allah keep all of us firm on the Prophetic shariah! "Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!", says the Quran. The remembrance of Allah is the only means of attaining peace of mind and not logic and reasoning:

"Logic", says Rumi "has wooden legs which lack all force".

Zikr helps the seeker to acquire a sort of relevance to His Presence, though not to His Being as dust can't have any relationship with the Lord of the Worlds. But a kind of link develops between the rememberer and the Remembered which spawns love. When love overpowers the heart, peace passes into it and this means the attainment of imperishable wealth:

"Continue Zikr till breath last as the purity of heart is related to the remembrance of the Merciful". Salaam in the beginning and in the end!

EPISTLE-93

It was written to Sikandar Khan Lodhi, advising him to remain busy with Zikr (invocation of Allah) all the time.

Your first obligation is to say five-time congregational Prayers and observe the confirmed sunnah, and then devote the rest of your time, whether of dining or resting or working, to the remembrance of Allah. No other engagement should prevail upon the heart. Continue acting upon the way you have learnt the invocation of Allah. If you feel some sort of disturbance in your self-possession and Zikr, first try to find out the cause and then do something for its removal. You should set yourself to Allah in all humility and lamentation, praying for cleansing the soul-stain. The Shaykh who has imparted Zikr to you is alone apt to be made your intermediary. Surely, Allah eases off every difficulty. Salaam!

EPISTLE-94

It was written to Khizar Khan Lodhi, highlighting the fact that a seeker could not reach Reality till he was able to do righteous deeds on the basis of correct beliefs.

May Allah keep you firm-footed on Prophetic shariah! Firstly, a seeker is supposed to correct his beliefs on the lines of orthodox followers who are destined to get deliverance. Secondly, actions should conform to theological rules which imply a knowledge of obligations and sunnahs, necessary and approvable, lawful and unlawful and disapprovable and dubious things. After theoretical and practical setting one may dart towards Reality, provided Allah wills so. However, the ascent is subject to what has been stated above:

محال است سعدی کہ راہ صفا
توان رفت جز در پی مصطفیٰ

“O Sa’di, it is impossible to embark upon the Way without the observance of Prophetic shariah”.

May Allah keep all of us steadfast in submission to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ!

EPISTLE-97

It was written to Sheikh Dervish, saying that obligatory worships aimed at the certitude of belief.

May Allah, through the agency of the Chief of Prophets ﷺ, reveal the essence of faith to the spiritually impoverished people like us! Man has been created to perform obligatory worships aiming at the certitude of belief which is the essence of faith. Maybe the Quranic verse, “And serve thy Lord till the inevitable cometh unto thee”, hints at the same meaning, because the word ‘till’ implies both end and cause – so that you may reach certainty. To put it like this, the pre-worship faith is the form of faith and not the essence of faith as interpreted above. The Quran says, “O ye who believe! Believe” this means, “O people! You who believe outwardly, believe inwardly along with the performance of acts of obligatory worships. And spiritual extinction and subsistence, implying sainthood, merely aim at this belief and nothing more. Yet it will be sheer heresy and blasphemy if these two terms are interpreted in a different sense which tends to suggest immanence and incarnation of Divinity. Many such phenomena

occur in a state of ecstasy and intoxication, yet the wayfarer should get by them and ask for Allah's pardon.

Ibrahim Bin Sheeban, a tenth century luminary, says, "The knowledge of extinction and subsistence grows aberrant and blasphemous if not conditioned by true servanthood and unblurred belief in Divine Oneness". No doubt he is true and this speaks of his inner strength.

Now I want to give you a trouble. Sheikh Allah/Bekhsh is a pious and virtuous man with a large following of devotees. If he seeks your help about something I hope you will pay your kind attention towards him. I salaam you and those who follow the right path.

EPISTLE-101

It was written to Mullah Hassan Kashmiri about those who belittle perfect saints and reproach them.

May Allah improve your condition and edify your heart! Maulana Mohammad Siddique conveyed your letter to me. Thank God, you haven't forgotten those who are sitting at a long distance from you. I have come to know about your apparent references to soul; any reproach of egoistic soul in its rebellious stage is admitted, yet there is no room for objection when it is integrated into the Spirit. At this stage the soul is at peace with Allah and He too approves it. Man rises above reproach when he worms into Allah's favour because his object becomes that of Allah. When he attunes himself to Divine morality, he automatically attains to inner wealth, and His sacred courtyard' is far above the reproach of evil souls:

آگہ از خوشن پوئست بین
چه خبر دارد از پنان و چنین

“When a foetus is even not aware of itself, how can it be cognizant of this or that thing”?

Very often the uniformed people, out of sheer ignorance, take a peaceful soul as an egoistic one and ascribe the latter's attributes to the former. Much the same way infidels had considered prophets as ordinary human beings and denied the accomplishments of prophethood. May Allah save us from the denial of these preserved souls (prophets) and that of their subordinates (saints)!

EPISTLE-103

It was written to Sheikh Farid, explaining the meaning of peacefulness and stressing the need of a Qazi (judge) for Sirhind.

May Allah keep you safe and sound and peaceful! I invoke the same peacefulness for you that a saint would beg from Allah only for one day. One day somebody asked him "Don't you think the state in which you are passing your days is peacefulness?" The saint replied, "I mean that I should be blessed with only one such day when I shall abstain from any sin or disobedience of Allah".

For long Sirhind has been without a Qazi and this obstructs the issuing of shariah commands. My nephew, for example, has become orphan. A portion of his father's inheritance has been left out but there is no executioner for it. I have no option but to take possession of it without the permission of a Qazi. If a Qazi is appointed here, this matter can be settled. Similarly, so any other matters remain undecided owing to the absence of a Qazi.

EPISTLE-104

It was written to the Qazis of Mastkan as an expression of condolence.

The death of the head of your family has, no doubt, given you a rude shock, yet in view of servanthood one has no alternative but to submit oneself to the will of Allah. Man is brought forth in this world not for stay but for doing good deeds. There is no fear for him if he passes away while pursuing virtues, rather he is blessed with a kingly unconcern. The maxim, "Death is a bridge which connects two friends", befits such a man.

There should be no cause of grief over a death, instead the bereaved should worry about the departing soul as how he or she is treated in the heavenly abode and assist the dead person by means of invocations, petitionary prayers and almsgiving. A Prophetic Tradition says, "A dead person cries out for help in the grave and keeps awaiting the prayers which may come from his family members or from a friend. The prayer, when received, is the most precious thing for him. No doubt Allah showers His blessings of the magnitude of a

mountain over dead people on account of the prayers of those who are alive, and of course this is a special gift from the latter to the former”.

I have received your kind letter. Indeed the wintry winds are unbearable for dervishes otherwise I would not have kept you waiting for the reply. I have particularly recommended your case and I hope, by the grace of God, this will bring fruit. Writing more is of no use. Please convey my good wishes to the affectionate Qazi Hassan and other friends and be grateful to Allah in all matters.

EPISTLE-105

It was written to Hakim Abdul Qadir, a great scholar, telling him that no diet could work with a patient unless he was fully cured.

It is an admitted fact with all physicians that no diet, even mutanjan (name of a dish), can work with a patient till he is fully cured, rather it increases his disease.

ہرچہ گیرد علتی علت شود

“Every diet taken during a disease, becomes disease itself”.

Therefore, first of all an effort is made to remove a disease and then energy is restored to the patient step by step through proper nourishments. Similarly as long as man suffers from a heart disease, no worship or obedience can be of any use, rather it proves harmful to him. “Some people recite the Quran in such a way that it curses them”, yet another well-known Hadith says, “There are many fasters who get nothing except hunger and thirst” (because they don’t abstain from lying and backbiting).

EPISTLE-106

It was written to Mohamamd Sadiq Kashmiri, a renowned scholar of his time, impressing upon his mind that the love of Sufis was one of the blessings of Allah.

I received your kind letter which smacked of excessive feelings of love and friendliness. I praise Allah and thank Him for it. The love for this group (Sufis), which is relevant to their gnosis, is one of the great blessings of Allah. Let us be watchful of the lucky man who will be endowed with this blessing. Shaykh-ul-Islam Haravi has observed, "O God! Strange is the privilege that You have granted to Your friend; one who knows them finds You, and one cannot find them till You remain unfound. To owe grudge to them deadens one's soul and one always remains deprived of goodness by reproaching them.

May Allah safeguard all of us against this trial! Shaykh-ul-Islam further says, "O God! Whom You want to outcast from Your Presence You let him become our opponent":

"Even the worship of an angel is rejected if he lacks God's grace and that of his elect".

Allah has blessed you with reversion to truth and the way seeking and you should consider it a great blessing and pray for perseverance. I salaam that man who follows righteousness and clings to the obedience of Holy Prophet ﷺ.

EPISTLE-108

It was written to Mian Sayyed Ahmad Bajwari, informing him that a saint could never be more blessed than a prophet though some people would believe otherwise erroneously.

May Allah keep all of us steadfast in submission to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Some Shaykhs have uttered in a state of inebriety, "Saintliness is superior to prophecy", while others say it means the saintliness of a prophet so that one may not harbour the notion of a saint's superiority in contrast with a prophet. Yet the fact is quite otherwise because the prophecy of a prophet is higher than his saintliness. A saint, because of his undilated breast, cannot turn to people. But as, on the other hand, a prophet enjoys a remarkable expansion of bosom, he can simultaneously be disposed to the Creator and creature without any interruption from either side. In case of prophecy the object of attention is not only creature that saintliness, which is wholly God-oriented, should be preferred to it. We seek refuge of the Glorified Allah.

The status of prophecy is far above and it is the unthinking herds who are prone to creature. The inebriated Sufis can hardly comprehend this subtle point but the firmly-footed Shaykhs have the distinction of its awareness:

مِنَ الْإِيَّامِ الْمُبَارِكَةِ
 "Let the inmates of paradise be happy with the heavenly blessings".

Aside from it I have a point that Mian Sheikh Abdullah, son of Mian Sheikh Abdur Rahim, is my relative. His father had been an employee of Bahadur Khan for a long period. Now he is indigent and lacks eyesight. He has sent his son to Bahadur Khan for employment; it will be useful if you also drop a hint to the latter in this connection. Salaam!

The fact is quite otherwise because the prophecy of a prophet is higher than his sainthood. A saint because of his undimmed breast cannot turn to people. But as on the other hand a prophet enjoys a remarkable expansion of bosom, he can simultaneously be disposed to the Creator and creature without any interruption from either side. In case of prophecy the object of attention is not only creature that sainthood, which is really God-oriented, should be preferred to it. We seek refuge

in the name of Allah

EPISTLE-109

It was written to Hakim Sadar (Masihuzzaman Mirza Sadruddin Bin Fakhruddin Shirazi), a renowned physician who came from Iran to India during the reign of Akbar and died in the Shahjahan period, with the topic being the heart's wholesomeness and forgetfulness of the non-God.

Dervishes are physicians of soul diseases and they cure them by virtue of their spiritual attention.. their words are medicine and their look is curative. "These are the people", says a Prophetic Tradition, "whose companions cannot be illucky", and these are the companions of Allah" and "by the blessing of these people rain falls and creature is given subsistence through them", say another two Traditions.

The root cause of inner diseases is the heart's association with the non-God which in itself is the biggest disease, and an undamaged faith is unthinkable without dissociation from this entanglement. Because partnership is completely banned in Divine Presence as the Quran bears out, "Surely pure religion is for Allah only". What will be the fate of that man who prefers the non-God? It is a matter of extreme impudence if he

lets the love of the non-God overpower or eclipse the love of God. The Tradition, "Modesty is a ramification of faith", perhaps alludes to that".

And what implies the heart's non-involvement is the fact that there should be complete oblivion of the non-God or all phenomena, so much so that one may not think of them even if one so desires. There is no question of such a possibility in the state that is termed as extinction in Allah, and this is the first step in the Way. This stage is the fountainhead of emanation of eternal lights as well as esoteric sciences and subtleties, and deviation from it results in futile heartburning:

ہنچکس رات نگرود اوتا
نیت راہ دربار گاہ کبریا

"Non can find way to Divine Presence till the stage of extinction is achieved".

EPISTLE-110

It was written to Sadruddin to the effect that the creation of man was aimed at fulfilling all obligations of Allah's worship with full devotion.

May Allah you achieve the high stage coveted by excellent people! Man's creation is aimed at carrying out all obligations of Allah's worship and maintaining full devotion to Him, and this is subject to complete submission, both external and internal, to the Lord of Prophecy. May Allah enable all of us to observe every aspect of Prophetic sunnah in toto! O Lord of the Worlds, Amen!

بعد از خدای هر چه پرستند هیچ نیست
بے دولت است آنکه هیچ اختیار کرد

“Aside from one God, whatever is worshipped is untrue, and he who worships the untrue is most unfortunate”.

Apart from Allah whatever man aims at is his fetish, and he is unlikely to be free from it unless he has no object except Allah. Even the motivations of the hereafter and pleasures and blessings of paradise should not be his object

because apparently these are virtues but the elect count them as sins. If the concern for otherworldly things matters worse, where stands our attachment to the objects of this world which is intensely disapproved by Allah. Indeed He has been disinclined towards the world since the time of its creation: its love is the rootcause of all sins and its seeker is exposed to curse and condemnation. "The world is accursed", says a Prophetic Tradition: May Allah save us through the intermediary of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) from the wickedness of the world and that of which lies therein!

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلِّمْهُمْ مَا نَحْنُ فِيهِ

O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his family
and teach them what we are in

it. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his family
and teach them what we are in it. O Allah!
bless Muhammad and his family and teach them
what we are in it. O Allah! bless Muhammad
and his family and teach them what we are in it.

EPISTLE-111

It was written to Sheikh Hameed Sanbhi, a towering exegete of the Quran in the Mughal era, saying that Divine Unity meant to keep the heart free from everything which was other than God.

Praise be to Allah and salaam to His chosen slaves! Divine unity means to divest the heart of all that which is other than God, and as long as man's heart is involved with the non-God, though scantily, he is out of the pale of monotheists. Mere verbal acknowledgement of the Oneness, without reference to what lies at the heart, has no meaning at all for gnostics. Yet both verbal expression and belief in this connection are the prerequisites of faith and this is unavoidable. But it is in another sense. A clear-cut difference exists between "There is no god but Allah" and "None exists save Allah". Profession of faith is of exoteric nature and its perception depends on intuitive state and it is forbidden to open lips without recourse to the latter.

A group of saints has talked about this topic under either of these two states: (1) A state of ecstasy might have

overpowered and rendered them helpless. (2) or by the disclosure of their states they might have intended to provide others with a touchstone and help them to firm up in their states. Also their motive was to enable others to assess the waywardness of their states in their (former's) scale. Apart from these two states there is a taboo over the disclosure of secrets.

May Allah, for the sake of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his great descendants, bless the unfortunate people like us with even minor traits of luminaries to follow the Prophetic practice. Salaam!

I want to give you a trouble: The bearer of this chit, Sheikh Abdul Fattah, is a Hafiz (one who has learnt the Quran by heart) and belongs to a respectable family. Apart from being a father of several daughters, he has a large family to support. Being hard-pressed he saw no other way than to seek the help of a generous man, and I hope he will meet success. I think it is more than enough.

EPISTLE-112

It was written to Sheikh Abdul Jalil, telling him that our main concern should be the practice of the creeds of the rightly guided. Apart from this if we are also blessed with intuitional qualities and ecstasies, we should be thankful to Allah. Otherwise the practice of the shariah is more than sufficient.

May Allah keep us glued to what lies at the root of orthodox beliefs, make us spend our time the way He likes and fully attract us towards Himself after rewarding us for good actions:

کار اینست غیر این همه بیج

“This is the real task and the rest is just scum”.

These inspirations and ecstasies will be counted as mere wickedness and deceptive miracles (Istidraj displayed by a disbeliever) that contravene the accepted beliefs of the orthodox group which is wedded to salvation. And what is bestowed on us apart from complying with this group will stimulate our gratitude still further. We shall be happy and contented with sound beliefs only, no matter if we remain deprived of visions and ecstatic states.

Occasional outpourings and revelations of certain saints under a state of ecstasy and inebriation have been reported against the orthodox opinion, as their basis is intuition, they may be excused. They will not be called to account on Last Day as in the case of the error of judgment. "Even their error has a remuneration". And Truth is on the side of orthodox theologians. May Allah recompensate their effort! As the theological sciences originate from the Prophetic Lamp, their infallibility is beyond any doubt; whereas the occult knowledge of Sufis derives strength from intuition and inspiration which may be erring and untrue. The knowledge of orthodox doctors provides us with a criterion to assess the validity of mystical visions; even a shred of incompatibility to the former will render them reward less. Only the shariah is right and true and all that which is out of its pale is out-and-out heresy.

May Allah keep all of us unswerving in our total and all embracing submission to Holy Prophet ﷺ!

EPISTLE-113

It was written to Jamaluddin Hussain Kolaabi, explaining as to how the driving impulse (Jadhbah) of a novice was to be differentiated from that of an accomplished seeker. The letter also discloses that the ecstasy (Jadhb) of ecstasies originally flows out of the spirit which is above the heart, and they consider the unveiling of the spirit as that of the Being.

Praise be to Allah and salutation to His chosen slaves! Ecstasy never extends beyond the point of the spirit and the same is true to theophany and its way. The untravelled ecstasies don't rise above the heart's stage and their ecstasy never outstretches the point of the spirit. Whereas the Divine pull leads the accomplished seekers to absorption which has no stage above it. In the preliminary absorption only the human spirit is exposed to vision because the spirit exists in its real form. "No doubt Allah created Adam in His Own image", says a Prophetic Tradition. These ecstasies consider the vision of the spirit as the vision of Allah and as the spirit has a relevance to the corporeal world they call the multiplicity of this vision as the vision of the Transcendence. Sometimes they would

believe in His fellowship whereas in reality the vision of Allah depends on absolute union which occurs when the wayfarer reaches the end of the Path:

ہمچکس راتا نگرود اوتا
نیت راہ دربار گاہ کبریا

“Nobody can find way to the Divine Presence till he tastes extinction”.

The vision of the Being has nothing to do with that of the world with the difference between the two being that the one having an analogy to the corporeal world is unrelated to Allah; and if it is unanalogous it reflects the former. Indeed no words can match the God-related vision which is also inspid and unique like its Object:

چوں رابہ بی چوں راہ نیت

“How the exemplifiable can be compared to the Unexemplifiable”?

“Only the king’s camels can carry the things gifted by him”.

EPISTLE-115

It is addressed to Mullah Abdul Haq, saying that the Path which we want to travel along consists of only seven steps.

از ہرچہ می رود سخن دوست خوشتر است
پیغام آشنا نفس روح پرور است

“Whatever may be the source the talk of the friend is exhilarating”.

The Path which is our goal consists of only seven steps: two steps are meant for the corporeal world and five for the world of spirits. The emanation of actions makes its appearance when the seeker takes the first step in the world of spirits, while the attributive and essential emanations trigger off on the second and third steps respectively. Afterwards the essential emanations go on progressing according to the different levels of the accomplished saints, and all this depends on the obedience of the Prophet ﷺ.

Some masters are reported to have said that this is a two-step Way: this implies the corporeal world and the world of spirits. The aim is that the Path may seem to be brief and

easy to seekers. Indeed the point is the same as I have explained by The grace of Allah. This is exactly so.

EPISTLE-116

It is addressed to Mullah Abdul Wahid Lahori, saying that if everything, which is other than God, is banished from the heart its wholesomeness will be for sure. He has been advised by the writer not to be engrossed in mundane affairs lest the world should dominate his heart.

I received your kind letter and came to know about what you had written on the wholesomeness of the heart. No doubt this is achievable provided your heart discards everything which is other than God. So much so that in spite of your conscious effort you should not be able to recollect earthly objects. This state, in which the non-Divine even fails to flit across the heart, is called as annihilation of the heart and this is the first step on the Path that ordinarily determines the grades of saintly elevations according to one's aptitude. Be indifferent to toffees and cookies (fleeting visions) and steel up your force of decision as Allah likes it. Don't go deeper into wordly affairs lest you should become a captive of this worthless world. Nor should you be proud of your wholesome heart as there is a likelihood of reversion. Try your utmost to

abstain from attachments and don't take such step which may lead you back, to your disadvantage, to the corporeal fold. May the glorified Allah save you from this! The humblest position in the Sufi way is thousand times better than to associate with the rich. Exert all your energies to live this temporary life like a dervish who is disinclined towards this world. Be frightened of both wealth and the wealthy people as one is frightened of a lion. Salaam!

EPISTLE-117

It is addressed to Mullah Yar Mohammad Badakhshi, stressing this point that in the beginning the heart is conditioned by perception but in the last stage this condition goes.

Perhaps you will be remembering that for a long period the heart is governed by perception. Evidently what escapes perception also escapes the heart. "A man who lacks control over his eye he cannot contain his heart too", says a Tradition. The Tradition points to this reality. In the end of the Path when the heart is no more swayed by perception, the contiguity of the heart is not affected by what is away from perception. That is why the spiritual masters do not approve the absolute remoteness of a novice or median seeker from the Shaykh. To be brief, try to follow what you have been told and shun the company of uninitiated people.

The arrival of Mian Sheikh Muzammil is a welcome sign and you should deem it your good luck if you frequently sit in his company, because he is a rarity. Salaam!

EPISTLE-118

It was written to Mullah Qasim Ali Badakhshi about those people who reproach Sufis.

I received your loving letter and looked into its contents.

Allah says in His Book, "If somebody does good actions he does so for his own soul; and similarly if anyone indulges in bad pursuits, he faces a bad reaction".

Khawaja Abdullah Ansari has observed, "O God, if You intend to disgrace some person, he takes to reproaching us (Sufis)":

ترسم آن قوم که بر درد کشاں می خندند
بر سرکار خرابات کنند ایمان را

"Some people, I am afraid, may end up in the tavern with the loss of their faith laughing at those who are tipplers of dregs."

May God Almighty save believers through the intercession of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ from rejecting and reproving Sufis! Salaam!

EPISTLE-121

It was written to Meer Mohamamd Noaman, explaining that the Way had seven steps and some Sufis had completed six steps.

Dear Meer, I wish you countless blessings. For long I have not heard from you nor have you enquired about your fellow - disciples living here. Thank God, they are all happy. Let me say something briefly.

O the indicator of love-signs, seven steps have been established for the way. Some friends have completed their task in six steps, and others in five steps. Yet some have reached their goal after four or three steps. The latter too can initiate people into the Way. But as for the former, they are certainly in a better position to train up novices. The spiritual affairs, however, call for exceptional courage, so that the seeker may not tend to be complacent with a lower grade. Time disallows me to write in detail. Salaam!

EPISTLE-122

It is addressed to Mullah Tahir Badakhshi, persuading him to be high-minded and to remain indifferent to what is available to him.

I may be excused for delay in replying your letter. Maulana Yar Mohammad will tell you the reason. When you are determined to embark upon journey towards India, you should set out and take care of your family. The other things, as the proverb goes, will be talked about on your visit. Allah's perpetual fellowship and aloofness from people are both necessary for you. Set you heart upon lofty targets and be not preoccupied with what you get:

ما از پی نوری که بود مشرق انوار
از مغربی و کوب و مشکوٰۃ گزشتیم

"I have gone through both traditional and rational sciences and now I am in the pursuit of Eastern lights".

A majority of today's dervishes are hallucinated by shadow appearances and illuminations and think that they have become perfect and attained the illumination of the Essence. Their company has unwholesome effects on the heart so you

run away from them as gone do from a lion. Strictly follow your way and don't trust what comes to your vision because there is a large scope for interpretation. Never depend on illusions:

كيف الوصول الى سعد ودونها

قلل الجبال و دونها حيو

“How should I reach my friend without a helper because daunting mountaintops and caves straddle the way”.

EPISTLE-123

It is also addressed to Mullah Tahir Badakhshi, telling him that if a supererogatory act, even Haj, is done at the cost of an obligatory act, the outcome will be zero.

O my good-natured brother I have received your letter. I wish you to keep yourself pure like your name Tahir (meaning pure) of the impurity of non-Divine attachments. O brother! A Tradition says, "Man's preoccupation with absurdities betrays his disobedience towards Allah". And to do a supererogatory worship will be considered pointless if something obligatory is set aside.

Man must do soulsearching in order to determine whether his preoccupation is supererogatory or obligatory. To commit so many forbiddings for the sake of a supererogatory Haj, as you can see, is not something appreciable. A wise man can follow a hint. I salaam you as well as your friends.

EPISTLE-124

It is also addressed to Mullah Tahir Badakhshi, saying that one should have enough money to defray the Haj expenditures otherwise there is no sense in going for Haj.

I have received your letter. Thank God, the time-gap has not affected your sincerity and love. This is an auspicious sign.

O the loving man! At the time of departure when you had sought permission and were determined to go for Haj. I probably hinted at sharing the journey with you. I certainly intended to go but was not granted spiritual permission by the Providence. When I saw no reason in this I gave up the idea.

From the very beginning I was not in favour of your leaving off but I did not prevent you in view of your eagerness. Financially one should be able to afford this journey otherwise it is sheer waste of time. It is not judicious to give up an important business for the sake of an unimportant one. On this theme I have already despatched several letters to you. I don't know whether you have received them or not. This is the crux

of the matter but you have the freedom to exercise your own choice.

Salaam!

EPISTLE-128

It was written to Khawaja Muqem, saying that man's goal should be the unequalled Allah and none else.

Dear Muqem, you should not forget those who are away from you, rather think that they are not separate from you. Man is with that person whom he loves. I mean that the Sufi Path is long, the goal is transcendental, and whereas we are small-hearted.

May the glorified Allah save us from the middle route which is illusory. If a Sufi wrongly takes it as a goal and considers the comparable as incomparable he may not reach the real Object. One should be high-minded and not confined to what is achieved, rather God should be quested in transcendence. Yet such a breadth of soul is caused by the spiritual attention of the guide and this is subject to the love and sincerity of the disciple. "That is the bounty of Allah; which He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is of infinite bounty. (Quran LXII: 4)".

EPISTLE-130

It was written to Jamaluddin, a renowned scholar, saying that shifting states were undependable, one should keep in focus only the Incomparable and Incomparability.

Shifting states are undependable, and one should not be involved in what comes up and what fades out, and what is heard and what is said. What is sought after is beyond saying, hearing, seeing and vision. Novices of the Way are coaxed up with that is trifling. One must maintain spiritual ambition. What is to be done is something else, the rest is mere illusion. If somebody finds himself a king in dream, he is not so in reality, though such dream stimulates optimism. The Naqshbandi Shaykhs don't heed occurrences as their books stress the following verse:

چون غلام آفتابم ہم از آفتاب گویم
نہ شمع نہ شب پرستم کہ حدیث خواب گویم

“I am slave to the Sun and speak of the Sun. Neither I am night, nor I adore it that I will talk of dream”.

One should not be happy or sorrowful over what occurs or what fades out. One should keep a keen eye on attaining the object of the Incomparable and the Incomparability.

Salaam!

EPISTLE-132

It was written to Mullah Mohammad Siddiq Badakhshi, advising him to shun the rich and associate with dervishes.

“Our Lord! Cause not our hearts to stray after thus hast guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Thy Presence. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Bestower (Quran III: 8). O brother! It appears that on being fed up with dervishes you have taken up with the rich. This is bad. If you lack insight today (in their world) your eyes will be opened tomorrow (on the Day of Judgment). But your regret and repentance will be of no use at that time. It is my duty to warn you.

O the slave of passion! There are two alternatives: either you will have peace of mind in the company of wealthy people or you will not have it. In case you succeed it is bad, and if you fail it is worse. In the first case, God forbid, you will be a victim of self-deception, and as for the second the Quran (XXII: 11) itself identifies, “He loseth both the world and the Hereafter”.

The dusting of the hermitages of saints is better than closeness to the rich. If today it seems unreasonable to you, at

last you will see reason in it. But it will be all in vain. Dainty foods and the desire of costly dress love dragged you into hot water. However, things are not out of control as yet provided you revert to Allah. You must desist from a thing with a sense of aversion that stands in the way of Allah. Quran LXIII: 1) categorically says, "Lo! Among your wives and your children there are enemies for you, therefore beware of them".

I have been compelled by a sense of friendliness that once I should give you an advice, whether you follow it or not. I have already guessed from your senseless attitude that you will be hardly able to hold fast the saintly way:

رَقِدْ كَانَمَا خَفْتِ أَنْ يَكُونَا
أَنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"Verily what I feared did happen. Certainly we are returning to Allah".

I salute that person who follows guidance and is firm in his submission to the Prophet. I was optimistic about your conduct and talent yet you threw your gem into the gutter". Lo! We are Allah's and lo! Unto Him we are returning (Quran II:155)

EPISTLE-133

It was also written to Mullah Mohammad Siddiq, advising him to value his precious time.

Your messenger brought me your letter. You should consider your leisure as a godsend and value your precious time. The mere observance of customs and rituals is of no use, and lame excuses will simply result in loss and disappointment.

“Planners of tomorrow perished away”, says the Prophet. It is really bad if one spends one’s life in the pursuit of illusory things and safeguards the unreal against the real. In fact man is supposed to devote full time to important things and give a secondary place to worldly affairs and status symbols in a future setting. May Allah make us somewhat uneasy in our quest so that we may be free from the relief which we have in our association with the non-Divine! Simple words carry no effect, what is needed is a wholesome heart. We should endeavour to reach the real goal and set our face against futile things:

هر چه جز عشق خدای احسن است
گرشکر خواریست آن جان کندن است

“Everything which is apart from the love of good God may seem to be sweet, but in fact it causes (spiritual) death”.

The messenger’s duty is to convey the message.

EPISTLE-134

This letter was also written to Mullah Mohammad Siddique Badakhshi.

May the Exalted Allah, through the Prophetic intermediary, bless you with inconceivable heights in nearness to Him! O the love-stricken soul, "Time is a sword which severs life", as Sufis believe. We are not sure if we shall be given respite for tomorrow. We must do today what is important and necessary, and postpone to next day what is unnecessary. Worldly wisdom and otherworldly wisdom, both lay stress on it. What can I write more than it? Salaam!

EPISTLE-135

It was also written to Mullah Mohammad Siddiq Badakhshi on the difference between commonplace saintship and special saintship.

Let you know it that saintship, which is characterized by annihilation and subsistence, is of two kinds, commonplace and special. The first is independent saintship and the second is Mohammad saintship. As for Mohammad saintship it ensures both perfect annihilation and perfect subsistence. A man who is endowed with this great blessing his body is moulded into obedience to Allah and his bosom opens for real Islam. Peace is brought to his soul by subduing its wicked and disgraceful side. He submits to the will of Allah and wins His pleasure. His hidden point of heart (Latifah Ruh) opens up to the vision of the Divine Nature, his hidden consciousness (latifah Sirr) is blessed with "lightening flashes" of essential illuminations by witnessing Divine modes and considerations; his inner consciousness (Latifah Khafi) sinks into bewilderment on the vision of inconceivable Divine purity, sanctity, majesty and

grandeur and his innermost consciousness (latifah Akhfa) is fused into the Essence in a unique and imperceptible way:

هنيئاً لأرباب النعيم نعيمها

“Let the inmates of paradise be happy with the heavenly blessings”.

It is important to note that Mohammadan saintship has a singular status of its own as compared to other categories of saintship both in respect of ascension and descension. It is particularly so with reference to ascension where the annihilation and subsistence of the innermost consciousness are peculiar to this saintship. From the viewpoint of varying degrees the ascension in other saintships is confined to the inner consciousness - some saints rise up to the hidden point (latifah) of spirit, some to the hidden consciousness while others to the inner consciousness which is the highest stage of commonplace saintship. On the descension side Sufis also benefit physically from the perfections of this saintship because on the Night of Ascent the Prophet ﷺ was taken up to heaven physically. The Prophet ﷺ witnessed heavens to the extent that Allah wanted and hell and paradise were exposed to his vision. Apart from the revelation that descended upon him on the occasion the Prophet ﷺ saw the Countenance of Allah with his own eyes. This type of ascent is consecrated only to

the Prophet ﷺ, yet the saints who obey and follow him to the utmost, also share this special status to some extent:

وللارض من كاس الكرام نصيب

“Let the dust drink from the saintly cup too”.

In brief, only the Prophet ﷺ is privileged to have the sight of Allah’s Countenance in this world and the state which saints attain by following in his footprints is not the same. That sight and this state are as different as are the root and branch or as man and his shadow. None of the two is the prototype of the other.

EPISTLE-136

It was written to Mullah Mohammad Siddiq, advising him that there should be no delay in reaching the real goal, Allah.

I received your kind letter. But since the messenger had reached during the last ten days of Ramadhan I wrote down the replies of letters after the end of it. I have also despatched replies to the letters of (Abdur Rahim) Khan Khanan and Khawaja Abdullah. You can also see them. This time I didn't like your visit to the cantonment. Let us see what is the mystery behind it as everything is in the hands of Allah.

Just think that Allah, out of His infinite grace, has bestowed on you the means of income to meet your daily requirements. Take it more than enough and start worrying about the real task. Don't live on hopes because in the Sufi way it is counted as unbelief: I am in the dark about the clearance of your debt and you can try Khawaja Sahib. In case you are doubtful you should open your heart to him. And if his reply also comes in clear terms with a positive response, you should go to him, to serve your purpose. Yet there is no remedy if you

are bent upon delaying this matter. Whatever you want do hurriedly making use of the leisure time.

EPISTLE-137

It is addressed to Haji Khizar Afghani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, one of the eminent deputies of the Mujaddid رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, mentioning the high merit of the performance of Salat (Prayer).

I have received your lovely letter and come to know about its contents. It is one of the great blessings of Allah if one is ardently interested in worship and not weighed down by a sense of burden in its performance. A novice lacks eagerness in saying Prayer, particularly the obligatory Prayer, because in initial stages he feels gratification in supererogatory Prayers. Yet in the last stage only obligatory Prayers stimulate him because he feels their importance whereas his interest flags away in supererogations:

این کار دولت است کنون تا کرارسد

“It is a great blessing, let us see on whom it is bestowed”?

Let you know it that the pleasure you feel in the Prayer damps your soul, rather agonises it. Good God! What a matter of distinction it is!

هنيئاً لأرباب النعيم نعيمها

“Let the inmates of paradise be happy with the heavenly blessings.”

It is more than enough for ‘greedy’ people like us to talk about or hear such things:

“At least let me cherish this idea”.

Moreover, you should know it what Salat is as meritorious a thing in the world as will be the witnessing of Allah’s face in the hereafter. In this world the utmost nearness to Allah lies in Salat, while in the hereafter one will have it at the sight of Allah. Besides, I may tell you that all other prayers are performed for the sake of Salat which is the real aim.

Salaam!

EPISTLE-138

It was written to Sheikh Bahauddin, advising him to shun the company of worldlings.

My obedient son! You must not be pleased with this insignificant and contemptible world. What matters is a perpetual awareness of Divine Presence and this must be retained at every cost. We must be concerned about what we are purchasing and what disposing of. It is sheer folly and ignorance to purchase the world at the cost of the hereafter and to be tied up with people on being away from Allah. To combine the world with the hereafter is like bringing two opposites together. Somebody has said that it would have been a good thing if religion and the world were brought on a single point. You can choose any of the two opposites and sell yourself in return of any of the two. But you must know that punishment in the hereafter is eternal and worldly possessions are perishable. The world is an object of contempt in the eyes of Allah, whereas He has a liking for the hereafter:

One day you have to leave behind your family, you had better if you give them in the protection of Allah. From today

you consider yourself as dead and consign all matters to the Greatest of all. Allah says, "Lo! Among your wives and children there are enemies for you, therefore beware of them (Quran LXIII:14)". The Quranic verse is clear and definite and you might have heard it many a time. For how long this negligence will continue? You must open your eyes to see for yourself that an association with worldlings deadens the heart: the victim, indeed, faces an eternal death. A hint is enough for a wise man and there is no need to stress the point repeatedly. How is liberation possible when sumptuous dishes of the royal court exacerbate the diseases of the soul? "Caution! Caution! Caution!" is my advice:

من آنچه شرط باغ است بقاء میوه
 و خواب از غم پند کی خواب بدل

"No matter if you take advice or feel annoyed, I am conveying to you what the message calls for".

Be afraid of the company of worldlings as one is afraid of the lion. The lion, however, cause only physical death which is useful in the hereafter, yet the contacts with the king and courtiers will result in spiritual death and eternal loss. Stay away from their company, from their dining table, from their love and even from their very sight. A Tradition says, "A man

who shows courtesy to a wealthy man on account of his wealth is deprived of two-third of his faith”.

You should think whether all this courtesy and flattery is caused by their riches or something else. No doubt it is all due to their wealth and at the cost of two-third of faith. So both your Islam and salvation are gone as shows my argument. Yet I believe that dainty foods and bad company would have affected your quality of accepting advice and therefore hardly any words would appeal to you. Let you beware of their company, rather of their very sight.

My Allah, for the sake of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whose unerring vision has been lauded in the Book, save us from all that which is disapproved by Him! Salaam!

EPISTLE-139

It is addressed to Jafar Beg Nihani, a dignitary of the Moghul period, saying that the evil-minded people who reproach the men of God, should be lampooned and condemned. This act will be commendable.

I have received your kind letter. You keep enquiring about the welfare of the secluded dervishes and equally take care of all, whether present or absent.

Sir, when the Quraish pagans began to satirise and reproach the Muslims out of sheer malice, the Prophet ﷺ ordered some Islamic poets to pay the unthinking pagans in their own coins too. Therefore, they would appear on the pulpit in the Prophet's presence and openly read satirical poetry against the pagans. He said, "As long as they keep satirizing the pagans, the Holy Ghost remains with them". Reproof and persecution of people is a boon for passionate love. O Allah! Turn us into such lovers for the sake of the Chief of Prophets (amen)!

EPISTLE-140

It is addressed to Mullah Mohammad Masoom Kabuli, a great scholar of his time, impressing upon him that pains and sufferings are the prerequisites of love.

O the love-stricken man! Pains and sufferings are the prerequisites of love. Grief and tribulation are vital to the way of a dervish:

نوش از مشق قوم پاشنی ، فرات
در دیر فک اسباب هم چو فرات

“I enjoy the piquancy of pain and grief of your love, otherwise there is no dearth of luxuries in the world”.

The Companion (Allah) wants that His seeker should remain sorrowful and disconcerted so that he may be totally detached from other than Him. In this way comfort and discomfort, pleasure and anguish, peace and uneasiness and relief and heartache have reverse meanings, and the quest of easiness leads to hardship. There should be unconditional surrender to the Beloved, whatever comes from Him should be accepted with pleasure without knitting his brow. This is how

life should be spent. Try to the maximum to be unwavering otherwise the languor of old age will overpower you soon.

Your remembrance (of Allah) had gained momentum but it tapered off before taking root. If you become a little bit self-possessed against all these anxieties you will be in a much better position. Indeed the rootcause of mind's concentration is anxiety. Salaam!

EPISTLE-141

It was written to Mullah Mohammad Quleej, impressing upon him that love and sincerity were the central points of the Way.

May Allah bestow upon you ever-increasing attainments through the blessings of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ)! You have never written about your psychic condition. You should write about it occasionally because it draws spiritual attention. The finest thing of the Way is love and clean-heartedness. No matter if you don't feel progress at present. If the heart's cleanness persists, it is hoped that the task of years will be accomplished within moments. Salaam!

EPISTLE-142

It is addressed to Mullah Abdul Ghafoor Samarqandi, saying that the Naqshbandiah *Nisbat* (Engery - line), even if acquired in a small way, is something great.

I have received your kind letter. It is one of the great blessings of Allah to love dervishes and be inclined towards them. I hopefully pray to Allah for your perseverance. The offering sent by you for the dervishes was also received and they prayed for your health and safety. There was no reference in your letter to the lesson you had taken along with the *Nisbat*. God forbid, you may have been lethargic in this respect:

یہ چشم زدن نیل پیش نظر
بہت زوصال خوبرویان بر سر

“A flashing thought of him is better than a life-long union of sweethearts”.

The Naqshbandiah *Nisbat* (Energy line) (relation), even if acquired in a small way, must not be underestimated because the goal of others is imbedded in their beginning:

قیاس کن زکستان من بہار مرا

“Imagine my spring (glory) on the basis of my rose-garden”.

Yet one should not worry about listlessness in this way provided one's spiritual link is strong and deep-rooted.

The gown, used by me many a time, has been sent to you, so that you may put it on occasionally. You should carefully preserve it because you are expected to gain tremendous benefit from it. You should perform ablution prior to wearing it and then repeat the lesson. I hope this will give you perfect peace of mind. Whenever you want to write start from what occurs to you inwardly because outward affairs are unreliable without reference to it:

اے دوست! یہ سب باتیں دوستی کے لئے ہیں

“Whatever may be the source the talk of the friend is exhilarating”.

May Allah keep all of us steadfast in outward and inward submission to the Prophet ﷺ! (Amen).

اے دوست! یہ سب باتیں دوستی کے لئے ہیں

“This is the real task as the rest is just nothing”.

EPISTLE-143

It was written to Mullah Shams, telling him that youth should be considered a boon and not spent in playfulness and amusement.

May Allah inspire a lover of saints like you to deem his youth a boon and not spend it in playful engagements! Time should not be spent in pursuit of petty things lest one faces regret and embarrassment in the end. Penitence at the time will be of not use. Forewarning is my obligation. Differentiate between lawful and unlawful things. Deliverance in the hereafter depends on submission to the Law-giver (ﷻ). Short-lived pleasures and perishable pleasing gifts must not claim our attention. Allah alone is the inspirer for doing good deeds.

EPISTLE-144

It was written to Hafiz Mahmood Lahori, a devoted disciple of the writer, about the meaning of Sayr and its four stages.

May Allah bless you with utmost spiritual upgradation through the Holy Prophet ﷺ!

Sayr and Suluk (spiritual apprenticeship) imply mind's movement into knowledge which is of entrancing nature and by no means it means real movement. Sayr ila Allah, if looked from this angle, is to be defined as a process in which the seeker progresses from lower to higher knowledge, and from that to a still higher knowledge, and quite the other way his all knowledge of possible beings totally fades out. This step-by-step upgradation culminates in his cognition of the Necessary Being, which in Sufi phraseology connotes annihilation in Allah:

Sayr-fi Allah is likewise the progress of knowledge into the degrees of Necessity like Names, attributes, modes, considerations, immanency and transcendence leading the seeker to a point which is inexpressible in any words, symbols

adjectives and metaphors. To be brief, non can know or grasp it. This Sayr is termed as subsistence (in Allah).

Sayr an Allah bi Allah (being away from God with God), which is the third, stoops from the higher to lower knowledge, still lower and lower till the seeker descends from all levels of Necessity reverting to the level of possible beings. He is the gnostic who, owing to his association with Allah, is reduced to a state of complete oblivion, and returns from Allah with Allah. He loses yet finds, united yet disunited and near yet farther.

The fourth one, Sayr fil Ashiya bi Allah (movements into thins with Allah), is regaining the knowledge of all things one by one which dimmed out during the first Sayr. Now you can see that the first Sayr is contrasted to the fourth Sayr, while the second confronts the third. The first and the second, known as annihilation and subsistence are meant for attaining sainthood while the third and the fourth are concerned with the preaching purpose which is the characteristic of prophets and messengers. However, the accomplished saints too benefit from the prophetic elevation as Allah says in His Book, "Say: This is my Way: I call unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follow me (Quran XII:108)". This description

concerns the beginning and the end and is aimed at boosting Allah's name and infusing enthusiasm into seekers:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْأَلُكَ بِمَا نَسِيتُكَ
اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْأَلُكَ بِمَا نَسِيتُكَ

“O the bilious people! Enjoy candies to your heart's content till you are looked at as mad”.

May Allah bless those who are wedded to guidance and submission to the Prophet ﷺ!

EPISTLE-145

It was written to Mullah Abdur Rahman Mufti, a renowned jurist, saying that the Naqshbandiyah saints initiated their spiritual journey from the world of Omnipotence. It also disclosed as to why some novices lacked rapid impressionability.

May Allah inspire all of us with perseverance to observe the Shariah and also bless me with His mercy! Amen!

The Naqshbandiyah saints begin their spiritual journey from the world of Omnipotence and their journey towards the corporeal world comes in its fold. Whereas the Shaykhs of other orders do quite the other way and reach the stage of Divine attraction. Therefore, the Naqshbandiyah way is the nearest one. Evidently, others goal is the beginning in this chain:

قیس بن زکات بن زکات بن زکات

“Imagine my spring (glory) on the basis of my rose-garden”

Though some of the Naqshbandiyah seekers begin their spiritual journey from the world of Omnipotence, their

susceptibility is slow and they do not rapidly attain ecstasy which is relevant to Divine attraction. The reason is that as compared to the corporeal world, the world of Omnipotence is not strong with them and this obstructs their impressionability. This state persists till the latter overpowers the former and things are reversed with the remedy being that some perfect saint of this order should exert his spiritual power on the novice.

The alternative remedy, attuned to other orders, is the purification of self followed by rigorous exercises and austerities in accordance with the Shariah. It may be mentioned here that delayed impressionability is not a sign of lesser predisposition. Many of seekers, endowed with vigorous aptitude, also face this problem. Salaam!

EPISTLE-146

It was written to Sharfudding Hussain Badakhsh, (who had been imprisoned for his condemnation of Emperor Akbar's irreligious practices and attitudes), advising him to keep repeating the lesson imparted to him by the writer.

My son Sharfuddin Hussain I have received your letter. Praise be to Allah for His kindness that you have the privilege to remember the God-devoted men.

You must keep repeating the lesson, imparted to you, all the time. Don't dawdle away your leisure moments lest worldly pride and pomp and show should rob away your contentment:

“You should keep my advice in your mind that you are insensible and the world is attractive”.

What a blessing if God enables a man to be steadfastly penitent in the prime of his youth! All the worldly comforts are as incomparable to this blessing as a dewdrop to a deep ocean. Because only that blessing can achieve the will of Allah that surpasses all worldly and heavenly blessings. “But God's goodly acceptance is the greatest (bliss of all)”, says the Quran.

Greeting be to that man who follows guidance and takes upon himself submission to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ .

EPISTLE-148

It is addressed to Mullah Sadiq Kabuli, saying that one who lays claim of spiritual satiety is indeed deficient. The seeker, the letter says, must not be proud of the spiritual aid of Sufi masters as their forms are indeed the subtle points (Lataif) of his own spiritual director (Shaykh).

I received your two letters consecutively; one indicated your God-consciousness and spiritual satiety and the other pointed to your spiritual thirst and non-attainment. Praise be to the Glorified Allah, the second letter seems to be conveying the truth.

You have been repeatedly told not to be taken in by the spirituality of saints and their assistance because it is the Shaykh's subtle points (Lataif) which have personified them. Oneness is the prerequisite of the concentration of attention and as it is harmful to distract it. May the Glorified Allah protect us against it!

The other point is this that I have frequently reminded you to cut down your worldly engagements so that you may complete the spiritual task rapidly. It is extremely unwise if

you set aside an important task and give yourself to useless pursuits. But you follow your own opinion and anybody's advice has little effect on you. You can have your own way but the messenger's duty is to convey the message.

EPISTLE-149

It is addressed to Mullah Sadiq telling him it is true that the law of causation works in the world, yet it is not necessary that we should concentrate only on causes.

My brother Maulana Mohammad Sadiq! It surprises me that you have totally surrendered yourself to the world of causes. No doubt the Causer of causes, Allah, has established the law of causation yet it is not necessary that we should concertiate only on causes:

گردی بستہ شد ای دل دگر بکشائید

“O heart! If one door has been closed, the other one will be opened”.

This sort of shortsightedness seems to be the result of unconcern about the hereafter and it is something repugnant if a man like you talks of such things. Sometime you should do soulsearching and try to see this evil. It is really detestable if somebody being in the guise of a saint looks up to what (the world) is loathsome to Allah.

I wonder how this bad thing appears to be good to you. Man should indulge in worldly pursuits according to his needs.

and it is sheer folly if he does so throughout his life. This brief leisure (life) should be considered a boon. Myriad pities on the man who spends his time in futile engagements. It is my duty to warn. "But the messenger hath no other charge than to convey(Quran XVIII:54)". Don't take to heart what people talk about you. There is no need to worry if you do not have what people ascribe to you. What a blessing that people should consider a man God, whereas he is good in reality! And it is ruinous if the matter is otherwise. Salaam!

EPISTLE-150

Written to Khawaja Mohammad Qasim, the letter says that none is worthy of adoration except the eternal and self-existent God.

Dear brother, I was much pleased to receive your kind letter. Your heart should not be affected by unavoidable circumstances and changing situations in life. You should be least concerned about them because the world is not a lasting place. One should submit to the will of Allah in both adverse and favourable circumstances and only He should be the goal of one's life, particularly that of a nice friend like you.

If you hint at some service, I will endeavour to do it gratefully.

Salaam!

EPISTLE-151

It is addressed to Meer Moman Balkhi on the superiority and excellence of the Naqshbandiah order and the meaning of Recollection or Perpetual Awareness (Yad-dasht) which is peculiar to its masters.

از ہرچہ کی روغن دست خوشترست

“Whatever may be the source the talk of the friend is exhilarating”.

In the Naqshbandiah order Perpetual Awareness means the unconcealed Divine Presence without involving the veils of modes and considerations. Our masters do not give any credit to the Presence which is occasionally followed by concealment-occasional unveiling and veiling-as is the case with the “lightning flash” of Divine self-emanation in which Divine Presence is unveiled all of a sudden and then immediately all veils of modes and considerations drop in. Therefore the unconcealed Divine Presence, to sum up, is this that the “lightning flash” of Divine Self-emanation unveiling of the Essence without modes and considerations which comes in the end of the Path and symbolises total annihilation in Allah should become a perpetual feature with total end of veiling.

And if veiling occurs, Divine Presence will be substituted by concealment with no claim to Perpetual Awareness. This proves that the vision of Naqshbandiah masters is complete and most perfect and both complete annihilation and subsistence depend on it:

قیاس کن زگلستان من بہار مرا

“Imagine my spring (glory) on the basis of my rose-garden”.

EPISTLE-152

It is addressed to Sheikh Fareed, saying that submission to the Prophet is submission to Allah

The Glorified Allah says, "Whose obeyeth the messenger obeyeth Allah" (Quran IV:80). He clearly says that submission to His Prophet is exactly submission to Him. Therefore, any obedience which is not pipelined through the Prophetic channel is rejected by Allah, and He emphasises this fact in the Quranic contents so that any unreasonable man may not differentiate between these two shades of obedience by preferring one to the other. On another occasion Allah reproves a group of people who observe discrimination in this respect".... And (these people) seek to make distinction between Allah and His messengers and say: 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and seek to choose a way in between'. Such are disbelievers in truth'(Quran IV:151)".

No doubt some eminent saints have reportedly made such ecstatic utterances which make the distinction under reference and prefer the love of one to that of the other. It is said that once Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi was camping near

Kharqan and he sent his agents to Shaykh Abu-ul-Hasan Kharqani wishing that the Shaykh should see him. He directed them that if the Shaykh felt hesitant in this matter, they should recite before him the following Quranic verse. "Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority (Quran IV:59)".

When the agents saw that the Shaykh was hesitant they recited the same Quranic verse. He replied, "I am so busy with 'obey Allah' that I am ashamed to neglect 'obey the Prophet ﷺ'. How can I follow 'obey the sovereign'?"

The Shaykh differentiated between the obedience of Allah and the obedience of the Prophet ﷺ. This is at variance with perseverance and the firmly-footed saints abstain from such things. They identify the obedience of Allah with that of the Prophet ﷺ at all levels of the shariah, Path and Reality and the obedience of Allah, which is not the Prophetic practice, is considered by them as sheer blasphemy.

There is another story that Shaykh Mehnah Sheikh Abu Saeed Abu-ul-KHair, was holding a spiritual session in which a Sayyed saint of Khorasan was also participating. By chance an ecstatic came in and the Sheikh gave him preference to the Sayyed saint. The Sayyed was displeased with it. Yet the Shaykh told him, "Your respectability is due to the love of the

Prophet while that of the ecstatic is based on the love of Allah". The firmly-established saints, however, disapprove such a difference and are of the view that it is only under the impact of inebriety that the love of Allah overpowers the love of His Prophet ﷺ, yet it is not worth consideration to them. No doubt in the stage of excellence, which is associated with sainthood, the love of Allah sways, while in the stage of perfection, a characteristics of prophethood, the love of the Prophet ﷺ overpowers the heart. May Allah keep us steadfast in submission to the Prophet ﷺ as it is indeed submission to Allah!

EPISTLE-153

It is addressed to Mian Muzammil, one of the favourite disciples of the Mujaddid, urging release from the non-God's bondage, which is associated with annihilation in Allah.

I have received your letter. Praise be to Allah Who is generous and benevolent and keeps His seekers restless in their quest stripping off the comfort which they feel in the company of the non-God. Yet true deliverance from involvement with the non-God is not possible till one is completely absorbed in Allah. The seeker is supposed to wipe out all traces of what is other than God, cognitive or emotional, from the mirror of his heart. He should have no object before him except Allah and feel without Him as he is entangled in a thorny tree. Though man may think of this unrelatedness yet" lo! A guess can never take the place of the truth (Quran LIII:28)"

این کار دولت است کنون تا کرارسد

"Let us see who is chosen to be endowed with this great blessing".

A seeker who is fascinated by his states and stations, let alone other things, is indeed involved in the non-God:

ہرچہ از دوست دامنِ چہ کفر آن حرف وچہ ایمان

“Whether it is belief or unbelief, it is all the same if you are lead away from your friend. And to hell with those footprints which make you go astray from the way”.

Your long journey has come to an end and you should consider your leisure a God-send. Nothing can prevent you from seeking permission from friends if they are worthy, and there is no need to do so if they are unworthy. Only the will of Allah should be kept in view without caring for people's pleasure or displeasure:

“Whatever may be the bounty should come through the friend”.

Allah should be the goal, no matter if you get something or not.

“You ignore my cheeks and look at the flower”.

Salaam!

EPISTLE-154

It was written to Mian Muzammil, advising him that self-oblivion and self-accountability were vital to achieving disengagement from the non-God and nearness to Allah.

O Allah! Do not consign us to our souls for even a moment otherwise we shall be perished., nor even for a lesser time than it, lest we should be lost. Any misfortune that befalls us is the result of our own self-attachment. When man is disengaged from himself he is also disengaged from the non-God. If anybody worships idols he indeed worships himself "Hast thou seen him who maketh his desire God (Quran XXXXV:23)":

از خود چو گزشتی ہم میشت است و خوشی

"When you are released from yourself you will find nothing except happiness".

"Leave your soul and come".

To peep into one's heart is as indispensable as is self-abandonment because God can be found within oneself and not outside oneself:

ہم چونا بیٹا ہر ہر سوی دست
باتو زہر کلیم است ہر چہ صحت

“Whatever you want lies in your patched garment and do not extend your hand to every side like a blind man”.

Progress in the visible world (Sayr Afaqi) is far away and, on the other hand, the progress into the internal world is the nearest. Indeed, vision, gnosis and bewilderment are all subjective realities, and no spiritual stage is covered objectively. My pen has transgressed the real point. I fear that some simpleton may not read immanence or union into it and be misled:

“To think of immanence and union on this point will be a blasphemy”.

To think of this stage is forbidden before you experience it. May Allah enable all of us to hold on the way of the Prophet’s liking! Keep writing about your inner state, to your spiritual benefit, and be free despite your external relationships without allowing yourself to come under the impact. Salaam!

EPISTLE-155

It was also written to Mian Sheikh Muzammil, advising him to revert to his spiritual origin.

May Allah keep us with Him!

بعد از خدای برچہ پرستند بیج نیست
بے دولت ست آنکہ بیج اختیار کرد

“Whatever they worship resect God in just nothing. unfortunate in to man who adopts a thing which is just a scum.”

Accompanied by Mohammad Sadiq I have been on a visit to Delhi since Friday of the lunar month of Jamadi-ul-Awwal. God willing, after a four days stay here I shall leave for my native district because, says a Hadith, “the love of the homeland is a sign of faith”. Man is just helpless as his forelock is held by Him as the Quran (XI:56) says, “..... for there is no living creature which He does not hold by its forelock”. There is no refuge but to move towards Allah, saying “Therefore flee unto Allah; (Quran LI:50)”. However, after identifying the offshoot (Divine attributes) as a

dependant, the seeker should be engrossed in the vision of the Being:

ہرچہ جز عشقِ خداے احسن است
گر شکر خواریست آن جان کندن است

“Every thing, which is apart from the love of God, may seem to be sweet but in fact it causes (spiritual) death”.

EPISTLE-156

It is addressed to Mian Muzammil, persuading him to keep the company of men of God.

The letter, which you sent through a Kadi scion of Jalandhar was received by me in Delhi. Thank God, the love of dervishes is aflame in your heart. You are one of them in accordance with the Tradition which says, "Man is only with that thing which he likes". The lunar month of Rajab (when you intend to come) is not far off but even then it seems so:

فراق دوست اگر اندک است اندک نیست
درون دیده اگر نیم موت بسیار است

"Separation from the friend, even for a brief duration, is as unbearable as a small hair in the eye".

Since out of the regard for the privileged you have chosen to stay there, you ought to abide by the decision. Perhaps I might also stay here till Rajab. Only Allah has the correct knowledge and to whom shall we return. However, you should pass this brief life in the company of dervishes. The Quran (XVIII : 28) categorically says, "Restrain thyself alongwith those who cry unto their Lord at morn and evening,

seeking His countenance;” This is a directive from Allah to his Prophet ﷺ.

A great saint has observed, “O God! Strange is the privilege that You have granted to Your friends: one who knows them finds You, and one cannot find them till You remain unfound”. May Allah inspire all of us with the love for the elect!

EPISTLE-157

It is addressed to Hakim Abdul Wahab with the advice that a man should be totally divested of preconceived notions prior to visiting dervishes so that he should return enlightened. But first of all he should cherish right beliefs.

You called on me twice but went back hastily. The time was too short to make the visit fruitful. The object of visiting somebody is to gain something on reciprocal basis. Since your visit had nothing sort of the thing, it should not be counted as a visit.

One should visit dervishes with no preconceived notion so that one should return enlightened. Furthermore, the visitor should express his humility in order to invoke their sympathies and channelise the process of outpouring. To come unenlightened and to return unenlightened is not something appreciable. Loss of hunger is just symptomatic of a disease and indifference betrays nothing except superciliousness. Khawaja Bahauddin Naqshband رحمۃ اللہ علیہ says, "The favour of a broken heart is subject to supplication and submissiveness". A seeker is supposed to fulfil this condition. It is a must.

A while ago a student came with the intent that I should recommend him to you. It occurred to me that your visit had brought me under obligation and I should also do something to recompense it. I felt that in order to straighten things, as mentioned above, I should write down a few sentences in accordance with the situation. Only Allah inspires man with piety and enables him to adopt the right path.

O the blessed soul! We are all under obligation to amend our beliefs in the light of the Book and sunnah as orthodox ulema grasped them and hammered out their conclusions. A layman's understanding is undependable as it can't be commensurate with theirs. Because every misled innovator falsely believes that he derives instructions from the Quran and sunnah, whereas all that is of no help to him to reach truth.

Secondly, to acquire knowledge of the shariah injunctions like lawful and unlawful, and obligation and indispensable; thirdly to put knowledge into practice; and fourthly, to polish the heart on Sufi patten. The knowledge of the Islamic law can be of no use till one amends one's beliefs; unless the two are harmonised to the correct point, no action becomes fruitful; and self-purification is hardly possible till all the three factors are brought together. These four organs are

complementary to each other as is sunnah to obligation. The rest is sheer nonsense. "A sign of good faith is this that man gives up useless things, and takes to purposeful and useful ones", says a Tradition. Peace be upon that man who firmly follows what comes from the Prophet ﷺ!

EPISTLE-158

It was written to Sheikh Hameed Bengali with regard to the difference in degrees of perfection.

The varying degrees of spiritual accomplishment, it may be discerned, are determined by different levels of aptitude, and this occurs in respect of magnitude and also qualitatively, and sometimes both aspects count simultaneously. The perfection of some Sufis is featured by attributive emanation, while Divine Self-emanation is the hallmark of others. In spite of a tremendous difference between these two groups of Sufis including their followers, some become perfect owing to redemption of their heart and spirit from the non-God, while the perfection of others is anchored in the two at the same time and also in the vision of the hidden consciousness (Sirr). As for the third group, all the three phenomena account for their accomplishment up to the point of wonder which is associated with inner consciousness (Khafi), while the attainment of the fourth one, besides covering all the four phenomena, reaches the junction which is attributed to the innermost consciousness (Akhfa). "That is the bounty of Allah:

which He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is of infinite bounty (Quran XLII:4)". Descension follows (in order to guide the public) after a Sufi is perfected in each of the grades under reference, or he stays in that station. The first station is related to spiritual direction attracting people towards Allah, and the second is that of rapturous absorption and aloofness from the public. Salaam!

EPISTLE-159

It was written to Sharfuddin Hussain Badakhshi with regard to a condolence.

Tribulations and adversities, though apparently bitter and painful, are in reality sweet and exhilarating to the soul. The body and soul are opposite to each other. the affliction of one is comforting to the other. As a depraved man is unable to distinguish between the two antonyms and their requisites, he falls out of the scope of our discussion and is not the object of our attention. "these are as the cattle-nay, but they are worse (Quran VII:179):

آگ از خوشن چو نیست جنین
چه خبر دارد از چنان و چنین

"When a foetus is even not aware of itself, how can it be cognizant of this or that thing".

This mystery remains unravelled to that man whose soul is harmonized to his body after degeneration and brings the world of spirits under the sway of the corporeal world. Allah's awareness cannot flash into his heart till he is disentangled from the corporeal world and his spirit reverts to

its origin. All sensibilities must be deadened prior to the attainment of this blessing. Sufi masters interpret this state as annihilation:

“Be dust so that flowers may grow out of it. There can be no flower if there is no dust”.

“A man who does not achieve ‘annihilation’ before death he should be mourned because he is exposed to a tragedy. The Muslims were plunged into grief over the death of your father, a reputedly pious man who strictly observed the shariah. “We are Allah’s and lo! Unto Him we are returning” (Quran II:156).

You are supposed to aid the dead people by means of alms-giving, prayer and seeking Allah’s forgiveness because they badly need aid like those who are alive.

“A Prophetic Tradition says, “A dead person cries out for help in the grave and keeps awaiting the prayers which may come from his family members or from a friend. The prayer, when received, is the most precious thing for him. No doubt Allah showers His blessings of the magnitude of a mountain over dead people on account of the prayers of those who are alive, and of course this is a special gift from the latter to the former.

Furthermore, you are advised to practise unceasing remembrance and contemplation because lifetime is brief and it should be spent on the most urgent things.

EPISTLE-161

It was written to Mullah Saleh Badakhshi Kolaabi, a long-time, reticent and submissive disciple of the great Mujaddid. One day he had met his future Shaykh by chance in Agra's Jamia Masjid and subsequently remained in his attendance for years. When Mullah Kolaabi reached perfection due to the Mujaddid's spiritual attention, he was awarded the robe of spiritual direction. Complying with the desire of his spiritual guide's sons, he compiled functions and practices which were routine to the Mujaddid.

The letter explains that the pursuit of the Way aims at the attainment of real faith which is conditioned by inner peace.

The motive behind completing the stages of the Way is that the seeker should reach real faith which depends on the peace of soul. Unless it is satisfied, there is no question of liberation; indeed the inner peace results from the heart's Purification. And this in turn occurs when the heart is disentangled from worldly pursuits and immersed only in Allah. In other words, the inner peace will come when the

seeker becomes oblivious of all things but the Creator. Peace will escape him unless he roots out even a shred of the non-God from his heart. One should strive for purifying the heart so that one acquires peace of soul.

“Such is the bounty of Allah, which He giveth unto whom He will. Allah is of infinite bounty”, says the Quran. Salaam!

EPISTLE-162

It was written to Khawaja Mohammad Siddiq Badakhshi about the superiority of fasting month Ramadhan.

In His glorified Name. His Word, which is characterised by modes of the Essence, comprehends all inherent accomplishments and attributive modes as mentioned earlier. Ramadhan embodies all virtues and blessings which flow from the Divine Essence and are the outcome of His states. Because whatever evil or defect takes place, originates from a perishable, corporeal being and its attributes. The Quran categorically says, "Whatever of good befalleth thee (O man) it is from Allah, and whatever of ill befalleth it is from thyself" (IV:79).

Therefore all that is good of this auspicious month results from those natural perfections which are totalised by the glory of Allah's Word; and the Holy Quran is the gist of that totality. Consequently both are fully consistent with each other: the Book is the epitome of all attainments and Ramadhan is the sure total of all virtues emanating from them. The same relevancy led to the revelation of the Book in this month. "The

month of Ramadhan in which was revealed the Quran (II:185). The Night of Power is the extract of this month, and we may exemplify them by the analogy of soul and body. Therefore that person who spends this month with its comprehensiveness, God willing, will benefit from all its blessings. Indeed he will enjoy and have peace of mind throughout the year. May Allah enable us to attain the favours and blessings of this auspicious month in a greater degree! Amen!

A Prophetic Tradition says. "When anybody of you is to break his fast, he should do so with date because it has blessing". The Prophet ﷺ used to break fast with date. Its blessing emerges out of the comprehensive and figural quality of the datepalm which bears the human form. The Prophet called the datepalm as the paternal aunt of human beings as it was created out of the left-over clay of Adam". Respect your paternal aunt, the datepalm, as it has been created out of Adam's piece of clay", says the Tradition. May be the epithet of 'blessing' was given to it due to its comprehensiveness. As a consequence its blessing is infused into the man who breaks fast with it and from this respect the essence of the datepalm becomes the ingredient of the eater's essence. This is how the eater makes for the countless attainments which are embedded in the overall substance of date.

All this is accomplished even if date is eaten unconditionally yet it is more effective and fully meets the end at the time of breaking fast (Iftari) when the faster lacks all carnal desires. The Prophet's ﷺ, saying, "Date is the best thing for a believer to keep fast", probably means that this particular diet, which becomes a component of the eater, complements his reality and not the reality of that diet. Since fast misses this object, date has been suggested for keeping fast (Sehri) as a compensatory measure. In other words, the eating of date produces the total effect of all edibles and its blessing remains up to the time of Iftari by virtue of its comprehensiveness. And the advantage of the diet, as mentioned above, is determined by this rule that it should be suggested strictly within the shariah framework and should not budge even an inch out of it. Furthermore, this advantage is crystallised into the inner eye of that eater who progresses from form to substance, and from the external to the internal. In such state his external is strengthened by the diet's external and his internal is perfected by its internal, otherwise the more external aid is proved to be defective and the eater remains purely loser:

"Try to transform the mouthful into a pearl and then eat to your capacity".

Early Iftari and delayed Sehri are only meant for perfecting the diet for the faster. Salaam!

EPISTLE-163

It is addressed to Sheikh Fareed, saying that Islam and disbelief are opposite to each other and there can be no reconciliation between the two. Compliment to one means disgrace to the other.

All praise is due to Allah who has graciously led us to Islam and made us the Ummah of the Prophet ﷺ! The happiness of the two worlds is contingent upon the obedience of the Prophet. Yet to observe Islamic principles and to abolish un-Islamic practices are vital to achieving this end. Because Islam and unbelief are poles apart and cannot come to a point of agreement. Compliment to one means disgrace to the other. Allah says;” O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern with them (Quran LXVI : 9). On the one hand Allah lauds the exemplary affability of His Prophet, yet on the other hand He tells him to wage Jihad against disbelievers and deal with them sternly. This proves that a stern attitude towards them is in harmony with exemplary affability. To put it like this, the glory of Islam implies the humiliation of unbelief and unbelievers, and one who endears unbelievers.

degrades the Muslims. To esteem them not only means to put them in a prestigious place, but to accommodate them in our meetings and to have social intercourse with them conveys the same sense. Rather they should be scornfully kept at an arm's length.

And if you unavoidably need their help and cooperation in some worldly matter, try to approach them in an indifferent manner to serve your purpose. Indeed, the pride of Islam urges us to ignore them setting aside all worldly considerations. In His Book Allah brands disbelievers as a hostile force against Him as well as His Prophet ﷺ. Therefore it is one of the major sins to mix up with them because in its mildest expression it weakens the will to enforce the shariah and to do away with the rites which are repugnant to Islam. Furthermore, it involves a feeling of fellowship which is a setback to Islam as friendship with Allah's enemy results in antagonisation against His Prophet ﷺ. As a matter of fact such bad deeds rob away the light of Islam though the doer may apparently profess his faith in Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. We seek Allah's refuge against the depravity of our lower selves and implication of our unvirtuous acts:

خوبه ندارد که مرد واصل است
حاصل خوبه بجز پندار نیست

“The rich man thinks that he has acquired nearness to Allah, whereas in reality it is mere egoism”.

The sole object of these impudent people is to deride at Islam and its followers and they are waiting for an opportune moment either to wipe out all Muslims or to drive them back to the fold of infidelity. The Muslims too should feel ashamed because modesty lies in faith, they should be sensitive about the ignominy of Muslimhood with the overriding thought being the disgrace of infidels. The suspension of Jizyah (non-Muslim tax) in India is the result of unbelievers companionship with the kings; its recovery aims at lowering their position, so that they may not have courage to flaunt off their riches, being always fearful of the confiscation of their wealth. The King has no right to drop this tax which is ordained by Allah to degrade them and project the Muslims:

جهود هر كه شود كشته، سود اسلام است

Anti-heathen attitude points to the force of Islam. As in His Book Allah calls heathens as unclean and impure, the Muslims too should view them from the same angle. Such attitude will quite naturally prevent them from sitting in the company of non-believers and participating in their meeting. Their honour will be much increased if we seek their counsel and then act upon it. Imagine the fate of that person who asks

for their spiritual help and prays through their intermediation. Allah says in His Book, "The prayer of disbelievers goeth (far) stray (Quran XIII : 14). There is no question of complying with their prayer, it is just futile. Yet this much is certain that this very act gives a boost to these ungraceful people. If they pray, they do so through the agency of their idols and one can imagine as to where things lead to. Not a trace of Muslimhood remains in such a case.

It has been observed, "Nobody can become a true believer unless people say about him that he has gone mad". Madness here means to grow indifferent to loss and profit for the cause of Islam. Whatever occurs to a Muslim, he should accept it as a matter of fate. He is supposed to remain contented even if he has no worldly gains. It makes him a true believer and ensures to him the good pleasure of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ, and this is the greatest wealth. We are pleased with the glorified Allah as the sustainer, Islam as a faith and Mohammad ﷺ as a Prophet:

"O Allah! keep us firm on it!"

Due to the shortage of time I have written you briefly whatever was necessary, and perhaps I would be able to write you a detailed letter.

As Islam is an antonym to unbelief, so is the hereafter to this world. The two cannot be harmonised to each other. The renunciation of the world is of two types. Firstly, to disclaim unnecessary, though lawful, things; this is the superior type. Secondly, the unlawful and dubious things should be left while the permissible ones should be enjoyed. Also this type, particularly in this age, is something rare and a boon:

“The sky, as compared to the empyrean, is below while it is far above the earth”.

Gold, silver and silky dress, forbidden by the shariah to men, must not be used. There is some room for silverly and golden utensils provided they are kept as decoration pieces. Yet there is a ban over their use in any form, also as a collyrium-box or perfume-container.

To be brief, Allah has also widened the sphere of permissibility and to avail it as a blessing is more enjoyable than the unlawful things. The permissible things involve the pleasure of Allah while the forbiddings incur His wrath. It is certainly unwise if somebody chooses ephemeral enjoyments as compared to the forbidden ones. May Allah keep all of us firm in the observance of Prophetic shariah!

We should always consult pious ulema in order to enquire about the lawful and unlawful things and follow their

decision. Because only the shariah guarantees salvation and all ways which contravene it are false and unreliable.

“After the truth what is their saving error”? (Quran X : 32).

Salaam!

EPISTLE-164

It is addressed to Hafiz Bahauddin Sirhindi, telling him that the Divine grace is flowing to all and sundry perpetually. Yet its acceptance or rejection depends on one's aptitude.

May God keep you firm out of His sheer grace to follow the shariah. The divine grace, whether in terms of wealth, or children, or guidance, is flowing indiscriminately and constantly to all and sundry, no matter if one is generous or miser. Yet the acceptance or non-acceptance of the blessings is a voluntary act of man". Allah wrongeth them not, but they did wrong themselves (Quran XVI : 33).

In summer, the clothes and the washerman are sunned alike, yet his face is tanned and the clothes are cleaned. However, the state of non-acceptance emerges out of man's deviation from God, and one who deviates is certainly unlucky and remains deprived of His grace. One may raise an objection here that many disobey Allah but are endowed with worldly gifts, whereas frustration should be their logical fate. Let you know it that in such cases bad luck deceptively comes in the guise of a blessing for the misery of the defaulter so that he

should remain engrossed in his error. Allah says, “Think they that in the wealth and sons wherewith We provide them. We hasten unto them with good things? Nay, but they perceive not (Quran XXIII : 55-56)”. Hence, in spite of their deflative attitude, the provision of worldly blessing is just meant for their wretchedness. Salaam!

EPISTLE-165

It is addressed to Sheikh Fareed, persuading him to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet and to deal sternly with the opponents of the Shariah.

May Allah bless you with the esoteric heritage of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the way you have been endowed with the external one and also be merciful to that man who says 'Amen'!

The external heritage of the Prophet ﷺ is related to the corporeal world, while his esoteric heritage concerns the world of spirits which is symbol of faith, gnosis and guidance. The gratitude for the first heritage should be reflected in the acquisition of the second one which is subject to total commitment to the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore you are supposed to obey and follow him with regard to commands and forbiddings, and this springs only from intense love for Prophet ﷺ.

Intensity of love for the Prophet ﷺ should be paralleled by hostility of the same degree towards his enemies

and opponents of his shariah. Love has no room for lethargy as the lover madly loves his beloved. He cannot tolerate even the slightest opponence of his beloved, nor can because make peace with his opponents. Two opposite emotions cannot co-exist as it is something unnatural because love and hatred present two contrasting pictures which are completely irreconcilable. The matter, it must be realised, is not out of hand as yet. You can make up past mistakes through repentance but things will be beyond control tomorrow (after death) with the resultant and regret and humiliation being of no avail:

بوقت صبح شود همچو روز معلومت
که با که باخت عشق درشب دیکور

“The reality will dawn upon there in the morning as to who was your partner in lovemaking in the dark night”.

The worldly assets are but a matter of illusion and eternal requital will be made in the hereafter. If this short-lived life is spent in submission to Prophet, there can be some hope of eternal redemption, otherwise any action, howsoever good it may, will be just futile:

محمد عربی کا بروی ہر دواست
کیسے خاک درش نیست خاک برہراو

“Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) is the honour of two worlds, and one who doesn't become the dust of his doorstep is bound to be condemned.

The submission to the Prophet ﷺ does not imply the rejection of the world which is a difficult task. Indeed the payment of Zakat (poor-due) involves the sense of total renunciation because it purifies and exempts wealth from loss. No doubt complete rejection of the world is preferable but the payment of Zakat carries the same effect:

آسمان نسبت بر عرش آمد فرود
ورنه بس عالیت سوس خاک تود

“As compared to the empyrean, the sky is below but it is far above the earth”

Therefore we must do our best to observe the shariah injunctions and give respect to orthodox ulema and righteous men. To make efforts to promote the shariah and to lower the image of heretics and unauthorised innovators should be our goal. “One who shows esteem for an innovator becomes helpful in undoing Islam”, says a Tradition.

We should also be hostile to infidels who are the enemies of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. Our endeavour should be to disgrace them and not to honour them. Maintaining a stiff attitude we are supposed to try our utmost to shun them. In

case of an urgent business we may half-heartedly contact them in order to have our end served. This is the way which leads to your great ancestor, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), and access to Divine Presence is difficult till it is adopted. What a pity!

كيف الوصول الى معاد دونها

قلل الجبال و دونهن خيوف

“How should I reach my friend without a helper because daunting mountain-tops and caves straddle the way”.

What more can I say?

اند کی پیش تو کفتم غم دل ترسیدم

کہ دل آزرده شوی ورنہ غن بسیار است

“I relate to you the grief of my heart briefly lest you should be annoyed, otherwise I have a long story to tell”.

EPISTLE-166

I was written to Mullah Mohammad Amin, a divine from Heart, who had settled in the vicinity of Lahore during the reign of Akbar. He died at the age of 86. The Mujaddid advises the addressee to practise the remembrance of Allah excessively during this short-lived life. This is utmost necessary, he says, to cure the disease of his soul.

Dear sir, how long will you continue self-indulgence and how long will you continue to fret and fume against yourself. You should consider yourself and all others as dead like the inanimate things. The Quran categorically states, "Lo! Thou wilt die, and lo! They will die" (XXXIX : 30). What is of utmost importance during this brief span of life is the fact that one should worry about healing one's psychic diseases by dint of unceasing remembrance of Allah. But nothing good can be expected of unceasing remembrance of Allah. But nothing good can be expected of a heart which is strongly anchored in the world and, to be sure, the lower self is better than that soul which is prone to the mean world. Allah calls for a sound heart and a liberated soul, yet we injudiciously seek such means as

are likely to enmesh the two. Myriad pities over such an attitude! “Allah wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves (Quran XVI : 33).

As for your physical weakness, by the grace of God you will soon regain health. I am quite sure about it. I have sent my cloak to you according to your desire, put it on and be watchful of the desired effect. The cloak has its own blessing.

ہر کس افسانہ بخواند افسانہ است
و آنکہ دیدش نقد خود مردانہ است

“It is just a story if anybody thinks so. Yet it is a reality for a man of truth”.

Salutation be to that man who takes to the guidelines and firmly follows Prophet Mohammad ﷺ!

EPISTLE-167

It was written to Hardey Ram Hindu who had expressed pro-Sufis sentiments, advising him to worship only the Glorified Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and to shun idol-worshipping.

I have received both of your letters which display the love of dervishes and devotion towards them. What a great blessing anybody is bestowed upon! The other point is this:

من آنچه شرط بلاغ است باتو میگویم
تو خواه از خنم چند گیر خواه ملال

“No matter if you take advice or feel annoyed, I am conveying to you what the message calls for”.

Let it be known to you that we love only one common Lord Whose sovereignty extends to the whole universe including the corporeal world and the world of spirits. He is incomparable and unparalleled and beyond likeness, form and example. To beget or to be begotten is not true to His Being, nor His Presence has any room for commensurability and identicalness. Even a shred of union and immanence is unthinkable in respect of His Pure Being, and it is just

repugnant to believe that he can be identified with a creature. God is timeless and spaceless as both time and space have been created by Him. There is no beginning to His past and no end to His future. Whatever is good and excellent comes from His Pure Being and whatever is defective and decadent is devoid of Him. Only He should be the object of adoration and worship.

Rama and Krishna and other similar gods of the Hindus all are the lowest creatures of Allah by virtue of their taking birth in human fashion. Rama was the son of Dasrath, brother of Laksmana and husband of Sita. When he could not protect his own wife, how could he help anybody? One should make use of one's brain and not follow them blindly. What a shame that anybody should call the Sustainer of the worlds as Rama and Krishna! It is just like that as if a great king should be called by the name of a worthless sweeper. It is altogether unwise to identify Rama with the Most Gracious Creator and the Incomparable and the comparable cannot be unified. The Lord of the worlds was not called as Rama and Krishna prior to their birth. Very strangely, after the birth of these two their names are implied to God, and their remembrance is considered as His remembrance. No, it is absolutely not the case.

All our Prophets, nearly 1.24 lakh in number, have persuaded and invited creatures to worship the Creator and prevented them from the worship of the non-God. They have been awe-inspired by the majesty and glory of Allah and looked upon themselves as helpless creatures. Yet the deities of the Hindus have considered themselves worshipable, persuading people to idolise them. No doubt they also believe in Allah but they lay stress on their anthropomorphic character. Taking this plea they have invited people to worship them and indulged in unlawful things under the misconception that nothing is forbidden to them and they can do anything they like. They have cherished a variety of such depraved ideas. They have been misled and have also misled others. On the contrary the Prophets had themselves acted upon what they had been preaching to others, and viewed themselves as humans like their fellow-humans.

ہمیں تفاوت رہ از کجاست تا کی

“Just see what a hell of difference is between the two ways”.

EPISTLE-168

It was written to Khawaja Mohammad Qasim son of Khawaja Amkanaghi, about the sublimity of the Naqshbandiyah order and those who had made undesirable innovations in it.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and salutations to Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) and his noble descendants! You are the focal point of the orders of Sufi masters and essence of eminent saints and along with prayers I invoke countless blessings on you. You are on the right path and may Allah you live long! This letter is a symbol of my eagerness to see you:

كيف الوصول الى سعادته
قلل الجبال و دهر حروف

“How should I reach my friend without a helper because daunting mountain-tops and caves beset the way”?

Your know that both the observance of Sunnah and abstention from heretical innovation (BIDAT) determine the sanctity of the Naqshbandiyah order and the greatness of its masters. The masters of this sublime path have practised the silent invocation (DHIKR) instead of the audible one and

disapproved audition (Sama), dancing (Raqs) and rapturous ecstasies which cannot be traced back to the Prophetic and Caliphate periods. They have laid stress on solitude in the crowd to the preclusion of solitariness and self-struggle in hermitage which were not practised in the early period of Islam. The practice of all this has done wonders with the obstention yielding fruits. For this reason it has been observed, "The end of others is included in the beginning of these masters". If their very look had a magical effect and their spoken words healed up psychic diseases, the reason lay behind their unmatched spiritual transmission. And if seekers were detached from the earthly pull, again the logic was to be stretched back to the spiritual attention and undaunted spirit of Naqshbandiyah saints:

نقشبندیہ عجب قافلہ سالاراند کہ برند از رہ پنهان بحرم قافلہ را
میرد دوسرہ خلوت و فکر چلہ را از دل سالک رہ جاذبہ ای صبحشان

"Strange are the Naqshbandiyan masters who secretly lead up their caravan to Haram (Kaaba). It is the impact of their company that wayfarers (Saliks) stop caring for seclusion and hermitage".

Yet that spiritual transmission is almost non-existent in this age and a group of seekers at the loss of this great wealth and sublime blessing, has vainly struggled in its quest. Being

hopeless they have been childishly contented with the acquisition of worthless pebbles or candies with a disregard for delicate substance - Naqshbandiah Nisbat (Energy - Line). Deviation from the noble tradition has led them to seek solace in audible invocations or audition and rapturous dancing out of sheer disillusionment. As they are alien to crowd-oriented solitude, they resort to reclusion. What is more, they believe that heretical innovation contribute to the making or perfection of this spiritual transmission and they take disorientation as orientation. May Allah give them true understanding and infuse them with sweet smell of the meritorious achievements of the Naqshbandiah masters! And in this connection I invoke the blessings of Quranic letter-symbols Noon and Sooad, the Holy Prophet and his noblest descendants.

Since the true Naqshbandiyah tradition has been pushed to the background owing to such things as prevail in that country (Central Asia), and its people, both small and big, have shifted to new ways from the old ones, it struck my mind that I should enlighten you as to release the pressure which weighs upon my heart. I am totally unaware of the sort of people who sit in your company, and nor do I know about their beliefs and convictions:

خواہم بشد ازدیدہ درین فکر جگر سوز
کاغوش کہ شد منزل آسائش و خوابت

“I am spending sleepless nights due to this heartburning as to with whom you will be sharing your delicate moments”.

May Allah safeguard you against hard days keeping you in His refuge and also exempt your convent from all tribulations!

People, dear sir, have so extensively introduced to this sublime orders novel things and heretical innovations that its opponents can assert, not without justification, that its hallmark is the observance of unauthorised innovation and abstention from sunnah. Tahajjud (midnight) Prayer, for example is being offered like Taraviah sunnah in the mosques and considered a virtuous act. People, to make matters worse, are persuaded to do it whereas theologians say that it is highly undesirable to offer a supererogatory (Nafli) Prayer in congregation. While others, averse to inviting people to participate in this Prayer, say that it should be offered in a mosque corner by not more than three persons otherwise it will be certainly undesirable.

Simslarly these ignorant people think that Tahajjud Prayer has thirteen Rak'ats (cycles): twelve Rak'ats in standing posture and two in sitting posture, seeking justification for one Rak'at as in their view to say Prayer in sitting posture carries half spiritual reward. Whereas such a thing is against the

Prophetic practice. The thirteen Rak'ats, offered by the Holy Prophet, also included Vitr (indispensable Prayer). The odd number of Tahajjud Prayer is by virtue of Vitr Rak'at and not how people fancy:

“I related to you the grief of my heart briefly lest you should be annoyed, otherwise I have a long story to tell”.

Surprisingly, heretical innovations and a variety of unorthodox views hold good in Central Asian cities which are centres of orthodox ulema. Indeed, we have been grounded in theological disciplines by sitting at their feet. Only the Glorified Allah can lead one to the right way. May Allah enable all of us to hold on the Prophetic shariah and bestow His mercy on that man who says ‘amen’?

EPISTLE-169

It was written to Sheikh Abdus Samad Sultanpuri in answer to his interrogation about a disciple who was reported to have told his Shaykh that if during his moments of togetherness with Allah even he intervened he (disciple) would sever his (Shaykh's) head. The Shaykh was much pleased to hear it and embraced his disciple.

Praise be to Allah and salutation to the Chief of Prophets. Mohammad (ﷺ) and all his sacred descendants! I was glad to receive your kind letter which posed a question. Dear sir, the main goal is direct awareness of Allah. In the beginning the seeker is morally at his lowest ebb on account of his worldly attachments, whereas Allah is the most Glorified and far above human imagination. This negates the harmony needed for the outflow and inflow of Divine grace. Consequently a competent guide, having emotional roots on both sides, is indispensable to serving as a bridge between the two and lead the seeker to his Object. When the seeker is perfectly attuned to Allah, the guide gets away from the two and lets the former unite with Him without his intermediacy. In

the rudimentary stages the disciple is not likely to witness the Divine Beauty except through his master's mirror, yet in the end he becomes self-sufficient and integrates into Him without strings.

This is however an ecstatic utterance on the part of the disciple that he will chop off the head of his master if he makes his appearance during the unitive moments. The firmly-established Sufis eschew insolent behaviour and do not use such words but achieve their aims through their master. Salaam!

EPISTLE-170

It was written to Sheikh Noor, one of the deputies of the writer, telling him that man had no way out but to fulfill rights due to Allah and people.

Praise be to Allah and salaam to His chosen slaves! O, the blessed brother! As Allah's commands and forbiddings are inescapable for man, similarly there is no way out for him but to fulfil sympathetically what is due to his fellow-humans. To carry out the commands of Allah and to behave kindly towards people; is said to be a gnostic motto. This concerns the two types of rights under reference and their fulfilling speaks of righteousness on the part of an individual. Now if anybody depends on either of the two and prefers an ingredient to the whole he will be far from attaining excellence. Good behaviour towards people and to strive for doing what is due to them are both necessary and inter-related. Indifference to them is not good and advisable:

ہر کہ عاشق شد اگرچہ نازنین عالم ست
ناز کی کی راست آید بار می باید کشید

“Tenderness doesn’t behove a lover because he has chosen a thorny way”.

Since you have spent a long period of time in apprenticeship and attended didactic sessions I should avoid a lengthy discussion and tend to be brief. May Allah keep all of us firm in the observance of Prophetic shariah!

EPISTLE-171

It was written to Mullan Tahir Badakhshi, saying that a Sufi was supposed to observe sunnah strictly and perpetually and meet the demands of servanthood in all humility.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and salaam to the Chief of Prophets and his purified descendants!

Following are the obligations of a Sufi:

1. To live incessantly in voluntary poverty with humility, supplication and lamentation.
2. Performance of the obligations of servitude.
3. Clinging to the observance of the Shariah.
4. Observance of the Prophetic practice.
5. Rectification of intention (submission to the will of Allah with regard to doing good deeds).
6. Inward sincerity and submission of outwardness.
7. To keep faults in view.
8. To be conscious of overwhelming sins and be afraid of the cross-examination of the Knower of the hidden.
9. To think little of even a great number of virtues.

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10. To be acutely conscious of sins, though these may be less.
 11. Hypersensitivity to the thought of popularity among people as says a Tradition, "This is more than enough for the badness of a man to whom people may point in both the religious and worldly realms (on account of his fame) but the one whom Allah saves".
 12. To consider his actions and intentions as faulty despite their being beyond any doubt.
 13. To be unmindful of his states and ecstasies, even if these are faultless and harmonious to the Shariah.
 14. To attract people to Truth in order to support and strengthen the Faith as well as Ummah and to promote the shariah. But neither they should be relied upon nor admired till they are manifestly established in the observance of Sunnah. Because as goes a Tradition, sometimes even disbelievers and debauchees extend such a support; "No doubt (on occasions) Allah gets even a libertine to give a helping hand to this Faith.
 15. If a seeker comes in quest for God and intends to tread the Path, the spiritual director should take him

as an object of fear like a lion as his advent may expose the latter to unhappiness and Divine deception (istidraj). And if instead the guide feels happy he should deem something it most abominable and take to supplication and penitence as a counteractive measure. This should continue till his heart's condition is changed and happiness replaced by grief and fear.

16. The master must not be tempted by the riches of a disciple because this will make things worse for him and obstruct his guidance to the object. "Surely pure religion is for Allah only" (Quran XXXIX: 3). This is the demand of Allah and undoubtedly there is no room for associating anything with him.
17. It must be noted that supplication, lamentation and penitence are the antidote to every stain of the soul but the one, which is stamped by worldly attachment, can be hardly removed. The Prophet ﷺ has said. "The love of the world is the rootcause of all errors". May Allah rid all of us of the world-seeking, world seekers and social intercourse with them! Because this is a deadly poison, the worst calamity and a contagious disease.

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18. Sheikh Hameed has happily left for you and you should lend a keen ear to his new revelations. Indeed you should seek his company. The rest will be talked about on your visit.

About the author

Mohammad Aslam (b. 1936) Educated at the Islamia College and the Punjab University, Lahore, destiny took him to the celebrated Pakistan Times. His association with the P.T staff continued for more than two decades and during this period, apart from doing the editing job, he tried his hard at variegated types of writing work--book reviews, features, translations, articles and editorials. Lastly he joined the International Islamic University as Editor of its English magazine and also took upon himself an additional workload of editing/ rewriting a number of books and voluminous documents. A genius like the late Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi generously lauded his professional skills and command of English. Besides penning some booklets he translated into English a uniquely significant travelogue (its author being a global Sufi Shaykh Hafiz Zulfikar Ahmad Naqshbandi) under the caption of "Travelling Across Central Asia". Earlier inspired by his eminent Shaykh Sayyed Mohammad Allauddin Jilani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ he ventured upon the daunting task of rendering into English the famous epistles of the Great Mujaddid Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ to whom he is passionately devoted by virtue of his spiritual affiliation to the Mujaddidi Order. His intellectual interest ranges from Sufism to history, philosophy and English literature.



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